

THE GALE
OF
OPPORTUNITY.

O R,

A SERMON Preached (at
Lidbury-North) at the Funerall
of the Worshipfull HUM-
PHRY WALCOT, of
Walcot, Esq; June 8.

1650.

And now Published,

By THOMAS FROYSELL, Minister of the
Gospell at *Clun* in *Shropshire*.

GAL. 6. 10. *As we have therefore opportu-
nity, let us doe good unto all men, especially to
them that are of the Household of Faith.*

HEB. 3. 13. *Exhort one another daily, while
it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened
through the deceitfulnesse of sin.*

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THE GALE
OF
OPPORTUNITY

A SERMON

OF THE REV. J. W. WILSON, D.D.,
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DELIVERED AT THE CHURCH OF THE
REDEMPTION, CHICAGO, ILL.,
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TO THE
Truly Vertuous and his much
Honored, Mistris Anne
Walcot, of Walcot.



I was your Husbands
desire (when alive)
that I should preach
His Funerall, and 'tis
yours, that I should Print it; Else
(for ought I know) it had never
seen the light: For I count not
any of my Grapes worth the
Presse: Therefore since it is your
pleasure to see this Sermon in a
Printed dresse, I pray accept of
it.

When your dear Husband was
alive, Ye were Two precious Di-
amonds set in the Ring of Marri-
age; God hath taken him away to

A 2 shine

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shine in another World, and hath left you to shine a while in this world; *It is but a while*, and therefore spread forth all your beams, before you set in the West of Death, and be seene here no more.

If we would shine with God in Heaven, we must shine for God on Earth: Let this Sermon of opportunities make you improve your opportunities: Shall the men of this world hug their opportunities for the world, and shall not we Husband our opportunities for Heaven?

Society with *Jesus Christ* even on this side Heaven, is a kinde of Heaven; and those Christall streams of Joys which we might suck from God here, outed all the pleasures and braveries of this world; which made *Bonaventure* (when the Devil tempting him, told him he was a reprobate, and therefore

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therefore perswaded him to drink
in the present pleasures of this
life, for (saith he) Thou art exclu-
ded from the future joyes with
God in Heaven) answer, No, not
so, Satan, If I must not injoy God
after this life, yet let me injoy him
as much as I can in this life: Oh
that drooping Soules would thus
quench Satans suggestions ! This
were enough to rebound all his
temptations back againe upon
him. *Fruition of God afar off in this
life (though we should never injoy him
in the next) is much better, then all
the world below him : Ah ! What
then will our fruition of him in
Heaven be ? Joy in him here,
and you shall enjoy him
hereafter : Live to him here,
and you shall live with him here-
after : And to this end God
gives you all your opportunities,
to this high and happy end, that*

*Si Non date
frui Deo et
virtute poss
hanc vitam,
fruemur eoin
praesenti.*

The Epistle

2 Cor. 2. 6.
Luke 19. 42.

you may attaine him. That him-
selfe, and all that he is worth may
be yours: And let me tel you, I
That a Sermon of opportunities is
almost as necessary to be preach-
ed, as to preach Christ himselfe:
because the opportunity to re-
ceive Christ is (in its kind) as ne-
cessary as Christ to be received: as
Christ is called *Salvation*; so our
opportunity is called the *Day of
Salvation*: *Behold now is the accepted
time, behold now is the day of Salva-
tion*. We loose *Salvation* it selfe,
if we loose the day of *Salvation*;
we loose Christ himselfe, if we let
passe the day of Christ, *If thou
hadst known, in this thy day, the
things which belong unto thy peace, but
now they are hid from thine eyes*. A
man that is to have a sum of mony
tendred him upon such a day,
must be sure to watch and wait
the day, if he would receive the
mony: He that hath a sute at Law
must,

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must observe the Terme-time ; if
he loose the Terme he will loose
his suite : as *Luther* said, that *Much*
of Religion consists in Adverbs : so
say I, That much weight of our
Salvation lyeth in circumstances,
in the circumstance of time and
opportunity: as the whole weight
of our Salvation is laid upon
Christ, so the whole weight of our
getting Salvation is laid upon our
time, our opportunity: 2 Let faith
give you a presentiality of things
to come, of Death to come, of
your Account to come : Faith
gives them a present Existence:
set the Period of your Time neer
unto you, behold it is at hand,
when you shall live no longer,
pray no longer, have the helpe of
Ordinances no longer ; We know
not how few sands are left in
our Glasse of opportunity, and
when they are once spent, God
will not turn the Glasse again for

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us: 'Tis this that affects the heart:
'Twas this that awaked *Nineveh*
to repentance: *Tet forty dayes and*
Nineveh shall be destroyed: How did
this Alarum stirre their Hearts!
what (say they) but forty dayes?
Are our dayes shut up into so a
narrow a room? What are forty
dayes? How soon will they see an
end? This frightened them into a
fit of Repentance: It is time for us
(say they) to fast and pray, and rise
out of sin, if our Sun be so neer
setting; I am perswaded if God
had sent *Jonah* with this message,
Tet fortie years and Nineveh shall be
destroyed, it had made no work at
all upon them: it might have
amazed them, but not started
them up to such a present repen-
tance: It is the neer approach of
our end that drives the work
home in us; Tell a Scornee in his
ruffe and jollity, that he must
dye one day; He receives it
carelessly,

Dedictory.

carelessly, and makes nothing of it; but tell him, yet forty dayes, and you must be called to judgement, Nay Sir, but two or three dayes hence, and dye you must; This goes to the quick, at this news the proud Ruffler is suddainly dismounted, and his courage degraded, he looses his blood in his checks, and shivers at the heart, like the leaves of the Forrest that are shaken with the wind; ah then see death upon us! Look upon our end as standing by us; as neer as are the shadow and the substance, so neer are Life and Death; our life is but the shadow, death brings substance with it, substantiall woes, or woes, or substantiall joyes in the bosome of it.

Cato Had oftentimes spoken in the Senate, that the City *Carthage* must be destroyed, being too neer a neighbour to the City of *Rome* :

For

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For a long time together he formed no *Oration* in the Senate, but he uttered in that still as the conclusion: yet he could not carry it, because *Scipio Nasica* being made up of a contrary opinion, alwayes pleaded on the other side, that it was for the good of the *Romane Common wealth*: that *Carthage* should stand: At last, *Cato* on a day brought a green Fig into the Senat among them, and told them, that this Fig was growing in *Carthage* but three dayes agoe: and thereby warned them that a Navy might within three dayes arrive from *Carthage*, and lay siege to their City: When they heard this, The neerness of the danger, made such impression on their thoughts that whereas before they could never be won upon to assent, now they voted not to give over till they level'd *Carthage* to the ground: And shall not eternity affect

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affect us? the needelle of it write
deep Characters of feare and care
upon our hearts? Within three
dayes, and death may lay siege to
our City, to our Soul; beware of
evill at hand, of death at hand, of
Judgement at hand. Thou Fool
(saith Christ) *This night thy soul*
shall be required of thee: ah then let
us Act betimes, let not the night
take us in a night, let not the night
of Death take us in a night of sin
and security, then we shall have a
double night at once upon us.

3 Opportunities are very pre-
cious: Every one according to
the objects they lay out for, value
their opportunitities: there's no
Prince or great person in the
world, hath more Clients, and at-
tendants, then opportunity hath:
All sorts Court her; and wait with
humblest service on her; The
Husbandman waits opportunity
to plow, and sow, and reap; The
Trades-

The Epistle

Tradesman attends opportunity to make his bargains at lowest rate, and sell off his wares at highest price ; The Ambitious man stands at the door of opportunity to raise himselfe ; All (but fools) according to their occasions run out to meet, and bow the knee to opportunity and shall not the *dearest* opportunities be precious to us ? shall we not take the *best* opportunity by the hand ? Opportunity to gaine the most precious things is the most precious opportunity ; opportunity to get the best treasures is the best opportunity ; *Godlinesse is great gaine*, Heaven is the highest advancement , The Soul is the Crowne and Master piece of man : surely then the opportunity to get and save these should be counted precious opportunity ; All things here (that are of the world) are but nothings, but Idols and shadows of the

1 Cor. 8. 4.
Tempus tūc est
ut sciamus.

Dedictory.

the best things (*and an idol is nothing.*) Time is but the Idol of Eternity, and things Temporall; but the Idolls of things Eternall; Our estate and our dayes here are but an Idol; There's no divinity nor immortaliry in them; but God is an absolute and eternall Being, the spring of all Divine satisfactions, They that live in him, live at an high rate, and live for ever; How can he complaine to want light, that lives in the midst of the sun? how can he complain of thirst, out of *whose belly flow rivers of living water*? Surely then oportunity to injoy God, is the most precious oportunity. Your Importunity hath fetcht out this Sermon of Oportunity from me: and I have given you here more then I preacht, the time being too narrow to deliver all at once,

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once, and therefore I was fain
to omit many things in the
Pulpit, which I had in my pa-
pers : The Spirit of the Lord
Preach it all over again to our
hearts : I commend you to
the Lord,

Who am

Yours most deeply ob-
liged to Honour and
Serve you,

THO. FROYSSELL.

Chm. O. 7. 1. 1.

1651.

To his
Highly HONORED
Mr John Walcot of
Walcot Esquire.



IR, In publishing this Sermon (Preached at your Fathers Funerall) I could not but publish your Name to it, or it to your Name, you being so neer to him, for Every Child is the Father multiplied; He loved you dearly, for his (and your own) sake, I cannot but love and honour you highly.

This Sermon was Preached for him, but it was Preached to you; and therefore God looks that it should work upon you: For at that time you had two Preachers at once Preaching to you, the

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the Preacher in the Coffin, and the Preacher in the Pulpit: He preach't to you that you must dye, This Sermon preach't to you how you must live: His Death preach't to you, that time will be gone; This Sermon Preacheth to you, how you should improve your time: As death is the way to eternall life, so an holy life is the way to an happy death: Your good Father dyed old, and you may dye young: as God writes some mens life in words at length, so sometimes God is pleased to write in short-hand cut a long life into a small Monosyllable: and therefore turne and winde your present stock of time to the best, and grow rich in grace upon it.

Remember

I You cannot begin too soone to serve Jesus Christ: One may begin too late, but he can never begin too soon to serve Jesus Christ: Where should the Flower of your Age grow but in the Garden of his service? It is the Policy
of

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of the Devill to discourage Early holinesse: He that goes out betimes in the morning, is more like to dispatch his Journey, than he that lingers till the day be spent. Bp. Hall.

2 You can never do too much for Jesus Christ: Religion knows no (a) excesse: you cannot favour too much of holinesse: as there be some persons that cannot beare the smell of Musk and sweet presumes, it fills their brains and makes them sick, so Hypocrites, (and they are Hypocrites that) cannot abide the smell of holy precisnesse, and the scent of strictnesse: Paul bids us be fervent in spirit (i.e. *corres*, that is, seething hot) serving the Lord: Qui non zelat, non amat, He that hath not zeale for Christ, hath not love to Christ: True zeale is a Seal of our Election: Strictnesse and exactnesse is the beauty and lustre of Religion: I say, you cannot doe too much for Jesus Christ, he hath done so much for us: And what doth Christ

(a) Religion, potest habere excessum secundum quantitatem absolutam, potest tamen habere excessum secundum quantitatem proportionis, prout scilicet in cultu divino sit aliud quod fieri non debet. Aquid

B require

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2^a 2. 9. 2. 41.
ad. 3.

*Sus non potest
ferre rosas &
amaracum.*

Rom. 12. 11.
Franz & Plin
*Iracundi sunt
qui amant. Lu-
cian. in dial.*

*Me c & Majj
Finis appeti-
non habet limi-
tes definitos. A-
ristot. Finis
prescribit me-
dia, sed ipsi fini
non prescribi-
tur.*

require of you, but he did the same for
you? Is he not upon equall termes with
you? Nay before hand with you? If
he calls you to bear the Crosse for him,
did he not bear a greater Crosse for
you? Grace puts no limits to holinesse:
He that makes God his End, thinks he
can never have enough of God, or be
too holy for God: And though his
actions of holinesse, and his forward-
nesse in them ever-run his Credit, or
over-throw his Estate, yet he cares not,
repents not; for 'tis not his End to
preserve himselfe, but to serve Iesus
Christ upon himselfe.

3 Holinesse is no upstart: Under
which notion the world looks upon it:
as if precisenesse in Religion were a
new fashion taken up, and put on by
some but of late: No; Holinesse was
the first Suite that ever was put upon
the back of mans nature: 'Tis more
naturall to man to be righteous; Sin is
against nature: 'Tis a defect of nature:
It came (as I may say) of the wrong
side

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*side of the Hedge, a meer Bastard :
God is not the Parent of it, it hath
nothing of God in it, 'twas the Devil
that begat it upon mans nature, and
therefore 'tis of a later Edition then
grace ; Grace was, when sin was not :
Let us make man (saith God) in our
Image, after our likenesse : You see
Grace is of a most ancient house, of the
highest antiquity, and therefore if any
thing will, it will ennoble you.*

Eccl. 7. 20.

Gen. 1. 26.

*4 And that you may be heated into
zeale for Jesus Christ, Live in the
Scripture fire: as the Salamander (they
say) lives in the fire, so do you live in
the Scripture, as your Element: It will
scorch you into an holy love to Jesus
Christ; No book becomes your hand like
the Bible ; It made David wiser then
his Teachers ; 'Tis this Book that
makes Preachers, and this Book is the
best Preacher ; This Booke will preach
to you in your Chamber ; By this Book
all Preachers and Hearers must be
judged at the last day ; This Book will*

B 2

expound

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expound to you that hidden Book that is within you, your Conscience, The Book of Conscience is a secret and intricate piece, very few are well read in it, most deceived by it; but this Book of Scripture I say, this Book will discover it, and shew you all the Errata in it; it will search your very heart, and tell all it's secrets to you, nay this Book will tell out Gods heart to you, and his minde concerning you, (cc) Luther hated his own Books, and (saith he) I often wish they were all lost, fearing least they should hold Readers in delay, and take them off from reading Scripture.

(cc) Ego odi
libros meos, &
sape opto eos in-
terire, quod
metuone moran-
tur lectores, &
abducant a le-
ctione ipsius
Scripturae, quae
sola omnis sapi-
entiae fons est,

Jerome gives a strange narrative of himselfe, how he was dragged to the Tribunal, because he had read Cicero more greedily then he did the Scripture; Being asked of my condition, (saith he) I answered, I was a Christian; Thou lyeest (saith the Judge) Ciceronianus es, non Christianus Thou art a Ciceronian, not a Christian
for

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for where thy Treasure is, there's
thy heart also. Presently (saith he)
I was put to silence, and had not a
word to say; and among the stripes
(for he had commanded me to be bea-
ten; I was scorched more with the fire
of Conscience, considering with myself
that Verse, In the Grave who will
give thee thanks? Then I began to
cry, Have mercy upon me, O Lord,
have mercy upon me; This voice
sounded loud amidst the scourgings;
At last, they that stood by, casting
themselves downe at the Presidents
knees, prayed him, th it he would par-
don my youth, and give place of repen-
tance to my Error, Then he requiring
punishment, if at any time I read
heathen Eooks, I, who in such a case
ould have promised you greater
matters, began to swear deeply, saying,
Lord if at any time I should read those
secular Books, I have denied thee;
And so upon this Oath he was
dismissed; And he adds moreover,

Psalms 6.

B 3

Neither

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Neither was this asleep or a vaine
dreame, with which we are often
deluded, Witnesse that Tribunall
before which I lay; Witnesse that
severe judgement which I trembled
at, that I pray God I never fall again
into such examination by torment;
I confessed, had my shoulders black
and blew, and felt the blowes after
my sleep, and have since read Gods
word with such endeavour, as I
never read before any human writing.
Thus far Saint Jerome; Now let
this passage awake you, and all of
us, Let us lay aside the sublimest
curiosities of mans wit, all Volumnes
for Scripture, And all imployments
for heaven.

Wing your haste, you have the
flourishing plumes of Age upon you,
How farre might you fly and soar
up quite to an heaven of experi-
ence, and communion with Jesus
Christ,

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Christ, if you would loose no time,
I say, if you would loose no time, I hope
you will not, I pray you may not,
For you may see in this Sermon, That
opportunity is an unvaluable Treas-
ure, and yet a transient Treasure, it
carrieth lasting things along with
it, and yet it selfe lasts not, staves
not with us, You may see in this
Sermon, what great things you
may loose your selfe if you loose your
opportunitie, you may loose your self
if you loose your opportunitie.

God hath set you upon the
higher ground, above many in
the world, Act highly for him;
Lay up a Rich stock of Grace
within you, that you may
have an heart to act for him
in publick; I wish you pro-
sperity here, felicity here-
after; Accept this Dedication

B 4

from

An Epistle.

from him, who doth, and shall
ever rest,

Your real servant in

CHRIST JESUS.

THO. FROYSSELL.

Clun, O^r Job.

8. 1651.

THE GALE
OF
OPPORTUNITY.

JOHN II. 8.

*For the Poore alwayes ye have
with you, but me ye have
not alwayes.*



E-thinks I see a sad
concourse of of peo-
ple before me this
day; and truly who
can be here and not
be sad? A great man
and a good man is fallen this day,
He lived amiable, and dyed desire-
able;

able; I am perswaded, you could
 all finde in your hearts to wish
 him into life again, but that you
 are loath to displease God; We
 must submit and kisse the hand of
 providence in the death of our
 dearest friends and Saints: We
 are now to performe our last office
 to him, we have brought him
 from his house to his house, I
 mean his grave, which must house
 him up till the great day of the
 Resurrection.

Ecc. 12. 5.

You see what Death doth, it
 plucks up the tree by the roots,
 the Cedar as well as the Shrub: To
 day we are green, within a little
 while we are not seen: Stay but a
 few dayes, and such a day as this
 will be thy day: And therefore
 that we may make a serious and
 spirituall use of this occasion, turn
 your eye and cast your thoughts
 upon the words of my Text.

For

of Opportunity.

3

*For the poore ye have alwayes
with you, but me ye have not
alwayes.*

These words are the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and they are an Apolgy, or Defence which he makes for a poor Saint, who having done a good worke (an act of love to Jesus Christ) was censured for it.

1 The work which was done, you shall see in the 3. vers. Then took Mary a pound of ointment, of Spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, And wiped his feet with her hair, and the House was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Observe:

1 The dear Saints are full of love to Jesus Christ:

2 Love will spare no cost: the Saints will spend the Spikenard of their credit, and the oyl of their life upon Jesus Christ, where we dearly love Christ, nothing is too dear for him.

2 You

of Opportunity.

2 You shall finde this work of love eclipsed, and censured in the 4th vers, *Then saith one of his Disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simons Son which should betray him, Why was not this sold for three hundred pence, and given to thee poore?*

Observation. There is no action so good, but some or other will be quarrelling with it, and find some fault in it : The best actions are capable of censure and disallowance : The noblest actions may have a scarre of reproach and censure put upon them :

And this he said (saith the 6.v.) *not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a Thiefe, and had the bag and bare what was put therein.*

Observ. Avarice wants not beautifull pretences : Hypocrites carry foul sins under a fair vail.

3 Now follows Christs Apology and defence of her, v. 7. *Then said Jesus Let her alone.*

Observ.

Obferu. Iefus Chrift will take his Saints part and plead their caufe againft the wicked.

*Nilil nocet caluminator, fi te
et tua opera
probat Deus.
Ferus.*

The Lord Chrift pleads and juftifies her action by two arguments.

1 The one Argument, from the end of the action, *The honour of Iefus Chrift, ver. 7. [Against the day of my burying hath ſhe kept this]* That is, ye doe willingly allow ſweet balmes and rich perfumes for the dead: Now I am within a little of death; Behold this woman hath herein reached beyond your conceit, ſhe hath done this (as her laſt office) toward my buriall: I hope you will affoord me thoſe ſolemnities of honour which are given to others at their buriall; now, againſt the day of my Buriall hath ſhe kept this.

2 The other Argument of defence he takes from the opportunity of it; ſhe hath now an opportunity

*Præſens pro futuro, ut infra,
John 16. 10.
Mat. 28. 20.*

portunity to shew me kindnesse,
 which within a little while will be
 taken from her [*For the poor alwayes
 you have with you, but me ye have not
 alwayes*] and therefore let her
 shew me kindnesse while she may:
*Ye have not me alwayes with you: that
 is, ye shall not have me alwayes
 with you: Indeed, I am with you
 alway even unto the end of the world.*
 in respect of my divine presence,
but me ye have not alwayes with you,
 in respect of my human presence.
 Six dayes hence I dye, and goe to
 Heaven, I goe quite away from
 you, and you shall neither see me,
 nor have me again among you to
 perform any such offices of respect
 to me, and therefore as for this
 action, she doth well to take the
 opportunity, which will be taken
 from her. Observe, and 'tis the
 point I shall discourse of at this
 time:

Doct.

Dost. There is an opportunity for good, which if we neglect, we may never have the like againe.

And therefore *Mark* rendreth it thus, for you have the poore with you alwayes, and whensoever you will you may do them good, [i.e. at any time] but me (saith Christ) ye have not alwayes. That is, you shall never want the opportunity of shewing kindnesse to the poor, for ye shall never want poor among you; the poor that want, you shall not want among you; they shall alwayes dwell among you, some poor or other as objects of your Charity: but you cannot alwayes performe service to me in my body, for you shall not have me alwayes in this visible forme and presence with you. And therefore be not angry with this woman, in that whilst I am present in body, she hath done this service to my body; The
houre

Marke. 14. 7.

Luke 17. 22.

*Docemur hoc
verbo, ut non
cassetur bene o-
perari, quando-
cumq; et quam-
diu occasionem
habemus non e-
nim semper id
poterimus. Feru
in Loc.*

houre is coming you shall wish
to doe the like, but cannot ; The
opportunity will be gone, when I
am gone, ye shall desire to see one
of the days of the Son of man, and
ye shall not see it: And therefore I
say,

*There is an opportunity of good,
which if we neglect we may never have
the like againe.*

Time and opportunity differ :
Time is the duration or succession
of hours : days, or years, oppor-
tunity is a concurrence of all other
helps with time, to crowne your
desires, and give birth to your de-
signes, opportunity is a meeting
of time and means together to
effect the end, when time and the
means are married and lodged
together they beget opportuni-
ty.

What oppor-
tunity is,

As the Marriner that intends a
voyage, Riggs his Ship, lyeth rea-
dy in the Haven, and waits the
wind,

wind, his time is all the time he
stays there : His opportunity is
when time, and tide, and wind,
and all other accomadations
meete together to send him
away.

*Occasionem parā
Temporis habens
in sed alicuius
idoneam faciens
et non faciens
opportunitatem.
Cicero. lb. i.
juvent.*

If you would speak with a man
upon such a day, your time is any
hour in the day, but your oppor-
tunity, to speak with him is, when
he is at home, and can be at leisure
and will afford you his company:
When all these claspe together,
that's your opportunity: So sup-
pose thy busines be to speak with
God, and seek him for grace or
comfort, thy time to speak with
God is all thy life time, but thy
opportunity to speak with God
is, when he is at home, and can be
found; when he gives thee a heart
to speak to him, and hath a heart
to speak with thee, and therefore
saith the Prophet, *Seek ye the Lord*

*Χρόνος Tem-
pus, spatium
temporis in ge-
nere: καὶ πᾶς
vero opportuni-
tas Rei geren-
da, quam Te-
rentius attica-
lum vocat. Pa-
for. in Χρόν. 11.
Isai. 55. 6.*

C

while

while he may be found, call ye upon him
while he is neer : when all these are
twisted together, that's the thread
of thine opportunity.

Time without opportunity is
like a body without the Soule, a
dead thing and meer inanimate
carkasse, and as the body is left
without the Soul, so is time many
times left without her opportuni-
ty.

καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸς
χρὸς.

So that time may stay, when
opportunity is lost : time may be
present when opportunity is past:
the tree of time may stand when
the leaves of opportunity are
dropt of : The stump of time may
stick fast in the root, when the
branches of opportunity are cut
down : the head of time may stand,
when the golden haire of oppor-
tunity are fallen off : when op-
portunity is gone, the head of
time is bal

And therefore I say, that there
is

is an opportunity for good, which if we neglect we may never have the like againe.

And this I wil shew you in two things:

1 There is an opportunity of receiving good, which if we neglect, we may never have the like againe.

2 There is an opportunity of doing good, which if we neglect, we may never have the like againe.

There is an opportunity to get, and an opportunity to act; an opportunity to lay up, and an opportunity to lay out spirituall treasures, which if we neglect we may never have the like againe.

1 I say there is an opportunity of receiving good, which if we neglect, may be we shall never have the like againe.

1 Sometimes there is an opportunity

C 2 portunity

Esaï. 7. 10,
11, 12.

portunity to beget faith in us, which if we neglect we may never have the like again ; as you may see in *Esaï*. And the Lord spak again unto *Abaz*, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, ask it either in the depth beneath, or in the height above: But *Abaz* said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. Ask a Signe, where thou wilt where thou thinkest it may be the greatest miracle, and give thee the greatest satisfaction, either in the depth, or in the height on earth, or in heaven.

Ah what an opportunity had *Abaz* here offered to inspire him with faith ! A miracle where he would, and what he would ; for the Prophet (a) prescribes not what signe *Abaz* should ask, lest haply the truth of the miracle might be suspected ; but leaves it to the Kings own option and free choice, whether he will have it towards the depth or height, in earth

(a) Ratio signi
autem (quod
certè magnum
est) Regi A-
bazar relinqui-
tur. Libera-
tum velis esse
an habere, siue
in supremis si-
ue in infernis.
Sam. Boh.
n. l. l. l.

earth or heaven, if earth were too low for a miracle, to heighthen his faith, he should have one as high as heaven.

Ah sweet opportunity ! ah strong opportunity to work such a faith in *Ahaz*, as to trust God for ever ; here was an opportunity for him to try God, to put the word of God to an experience ; and ah ! what scope had he ? Ask a *Signe in earth or Heaven*, where thou wilt, and what thou wilt, I will not grudge it, any thing to mount thy faith beyond the Region of feare and doubting ; to make thee and my people *Israel* belceve in me, thy faith shall want for nothing to support it ; God gave him leave to be his owne Carver.

As when a great friend comes to your house, you entertain him in this Language, Sir, command all that's here, ask what you'l have,

have 'tis yours: So did God be
 speak *Abaz*, all that's in heaven or
 earth is, for this minute, at thy
 service, the choicest miracle that
 heaven or earth can yeeld to ban-
 quet thy faith, command it, 'tis
 thine: what a rich table of oppor-
 tunity did God spread for him?
 What variety of dishes [a sign
 from Heaven or earth] did the
 Lord set before him, to entertain
 and feast his faith? Thus doth God
 condescend to sinners; when they
 wil not come up to him, he comes
 down to them: This was kind-
 nes enough to strike the fire of
 faith out of the hardest flint: Ah
 what an opportunity was here lost
 and once lost, 'twas lost for ever:
 we read not that the like was ever
 offered *Abaz* any more, but he
 grew worse: when men despise
 Gods opportunities, they grow
 worse & worse. So again, you have
 another sad instance in *2 Kings*;
 where

where *Elisba* prophesied in a time of scarcity, Thus saith the Lord, to morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flowre be sold for a Shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gate of Samaria; then a Lord on whose hand the King leaned, answered the man of God, and said, Behold, If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? and he said, Behold Thou shalt see it with thine eyes but shalt not eat thereof: And see this verified. And the King gave the Lord, on whose hand he leaned, the charge of the gate, and the people trod upon him in the gate, and he dyed as the man of God had said. He seeth the plenty for conviction of his unbelief, but he dyeth and tastes it not as a punishment of his unbelieve.

2 Kin. 7. 1. 2.

Verf. 17.

2 Sometimes an opportunity of repentance, and so of receiving pardon is given to a man which if he neglect, he may ne ver have the like again : Such an opportunity

C 4

Judas

Mat. 26. 21.
24.

Judas had : Judas had conceived a plot in the womb of his intention to betray Jesus Christ, and form'd it up into a conspiracy with the Pharisees to deliver him to them yet Jesus Christ gives him an opportunity once more to repent and recall himself before it be too late ; Verily I say unto you, one of you shall betray me, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth, as it is written, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed, it had been good for that man if he had not been borne.

Ah Judas ! What a thunder clap is here sent from heaven to awake thee? what a warning piece goeth off to scare thy soul out of sin ? Twas a providence thou shouldst sit at table once more with Christ, to heare something fall from his lips that might melt thy heart ; Ah, what an opportunity hadst thou

thou now put into thine hand, to repent, and retract thy purpose? for the Lord Jesus doth discover his sin, and doth dissuade him from his sin.

I He doth discover the Sin,

But not the person yet.

I say, He doth discover the sin [*one of you shall betray me*] the Lord Jesus discovers the sin that he might recover the sinner, He shewed him his sin, that he might not sin, he shewed him his sin before hand, that he might not sin underhand: he did strike the sin that he might open a veine of confession in Judas, and make him bleed kindly: Ah what an opportunity was here for Judas to confesse and be forgiven?

2 But he doth not discover the person yet: he doth not name him that he might not shame him; he opens the sin but not the person,

loa, that he might thaw him and not harden him : that he might winne him, but not irritate and provoke him : Jesus is yet tender of his credit, how much more of his soul ; what an heavenly dew of opportunity drops it self upon Judas to moysten his heart ?

In like manner, what an opportunity hast thou (O Sinner) to repent when God shall reprove thy secret Adulteries, and unjust dealings, and hypocrisie in a Sermon, and not discover yet ?

He doth disswade him from his sin by two arguments.

By Love and Terror ;

I By Love, *He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me :* which words were not spoken to discover Judas by this signe, but to aggravate his sin, as if he should say, my fellow commoner, one of my familiar friends, that eats of the same dish with

with me shall betray me.

And here Christ endeavours to melt the heart of Judas, and cause him to forbear, by an argument fetcht from all the kindnesse and intimacy that had been so long between them: what, my friend? my familiar? who doth not only sit at the same Table with me, but eat of the same dish with me, will he betray me? will that hand that hath been with me in the same dish, dip and dye it selfe into a Crimson colour in my blood? he disswades him by love, by the law of love and friendship.

2 He disswades him by Terror:

The Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed, it had been good for that man if he had not been born: where observe,

1 The Lord Jesus Christ bewayles not himself, but Judas, even whilst he threatens Judas, he pities

Judas:

*Judas: woe unto that man by whom
the Son of man is betrayed.*

2 He doth not yet unmask and disclose *Judas*: he carries the person yet in the clouds, he doth not as yet say *individuo*, Woe to thee O *Judas*; but speaks still in the generall, *Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed*: the individual discovery of *Judas* comes in afterwards, and here Jesus Christ does with this threatening way-lay *Judas*, to make him retreat, (b) seeking his salvation, *It had been good for that man if he had not been born*: as if he had said, if nothing else yet will, if nothing that hath been said, yet can recall the Traytor from his purpose of sinning, yet let this one thing bespeak him, and turne his heart quite about, his own safetie, his own fearfull condition, which will follow upon his sin, let that put a stop to his progresse: *Woe unto that man*

(b) *Pana pra-*
dicitur, quem
pudor non vice-
rate corrigit de-
nunciata suppli-
cia. Hieronim
in cap. 26. Mat.

man by whom the Son of man is betrayed, it had been good for that man if he had not been borne.

Here the door of opportunity stood open to Judas, and Jesus Christ stood in the door to invite Judas, but he had not an heart to goe in, and the opportunity was presently shut against him, and he never had the like again : he goes away, & becomes his own Executioner ; Judas betrayes Christ, and after betraies himself, when Christ called him, he would not repent kindly, and now he meets with an unkind repentance that Swallows him up in the gulph of despaire.

3 A man may have an opportunity given him to save his life, and so by consequent to save his soul, which if he neglects he may never have the like again. I will give you two sad instances, the one is *Lots* children in *Sodome* : Then the men said unto Lot, *whom hast thou yet here,*

Gen. 19. 12,
13, 14.

here, either son in Law, or thy sons or thy daughters, or whatsoever thou hast in the City, bring it out of this place; for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is great before the Lord, and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.

The Saints are so neer to God, that he wil save those that are neer to them, for their sakes; God would be a friend to Lots friends, a father to his children. And Lot went out and spake unto his sons in law which married his Daughters, and said, Up, get yee out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this City: Behold here's their opportunity! an opportunity to save their lives from fire and brimstone, and for ought I know, their soules from the fire of hell; O golden opportunity! for a mans life is his treasure, an opportunity to save ones life is the life of all opportunities, and therefore poore Lot goeth to
them:

them, Grace doth not extinguish nature: he flyeth upon wings of love to them, and tels them, he warnes them like a Prophet, and bespeaks them like a Father: but what say they? he seemed as one that mocked to his sons in Law; and so he leaves them, for his time was short, and now their opportunity is gone, and they are gone too: Farewell now, you are all dead men and women: God first raines down the golden drops of opportunity upon them to save their lives, which they neglect, and presently he rains downe showres of fire and brimstone on them, and takes away their lives.

Another instance is *Ahab* in the first of the Kings, *Wilt thou goe with me to battel to Ramoth Gilead? and Jehoshaphat said to the King of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses, and Jehoshaphat said, unto the King of Israel*

1 Kings 22, 4,
5, 7, 8, 17. &
28.

Israel enquire I pray thee at the word of the Lord to day, And Jehoshaphat said, is there not here a Prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him? And the King of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, there is yet one man Michaiiah the Son of Im-lah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord, but I hate him, for he doth not prophecie good concerning me, but evil: And Jehoshaphat said, let not the King say so. And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a sheapheard, and the Lord said these have no Master, let them returne every man to his house in peace: And Michaiiah said, if thou returne at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me.

Here was his opportunity to save his life: but goe he will, his opportunity expires, and his life too, for he never returns alive againe, for a certain man drew a Bow at a venture, and smote the King of Israel

*Israel between the joynts of the bar-
nes, wherefore he said unto the driver
of his Chariot, Turne thine hand and
carry me out of the Host, for I am
wounded.*

Vers. 34.

[A certain man drew a bow at
a venture] the man shot the Ar-
row, but God aimed it: the man
shot at a venture, but God levelled
it at *Ahab*: the man shot at he
knew not who, but *Ahab* in the
whole Army was Gods marks-
man; Carry me away saith *Ahab* out
of the Host for I am wounded: Oh
Ahab; What thinkest thou now of
Gods opportunities! What saist
thou now of *Micaiah*s words? I am
wounded; saith *Ahab*, I beleeve
thee, and the losse of thine oppor-
tunity wounds thee more: there's
death wounds in thy Soul, as well
as in thy body.

4 When an hypocrite will not
obey Gods expresse command, he
may lose his heart, and his restrai-

D

ning

ning grace forever after; when a man loves a sin better then Gods command, God leaves him to his sin: When a man gives up himself to a lust, God finds a time to give him up also, and sets him a going faster: he opens the fluces, and puls down the bankes, that the mans lust may run in a full stream, and have nothing to checke it.

Sinner! God will one time or other try thee secretly, with a casting command, a command that shall have the casting voice, and there's thine opportunity to make or marr thy selfe for ever.

The Glasse of *Balaams* story will shew you the face of this truth in it, when King *Balak* sent for *Balaam* to curse the people *Israel*, God denyes him leave to go, he sets his command before him, *Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed* Here's *Balaams* opportunity: the com-

Num. 22: 12.

command is set before him to try him, and *Balaam* stands now upon the turning point, But what's the issue? When the Messengers came again, *Balaam* solicits God againe for leave to goe, *Balack* promises him transcendent and high rewards, and they seal a deep impression upon the soft wax of his covetous heart, he is upon the wing to be gone, and what then? God now in judgment gives him leave to goe; *God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and goe with them.* Vers. 20.

But how can these stand together? in the 12 verse God said unto *Balaam*, *Thou shalt not goe with them*; But in the 20. Verse, *If the men come to call thee, rise up and goe with them*; Why did God bid him what before he did forbid him? At the first time, when he told him, *Thou shalt not goe with them*; God

D 2

shewed

shewed him the will of his approbation, but when at the second time God said to him, *Rise up, and goe with them*, 'twas a command with indignation.

Some things God permits with indignation, not for that he gives leave to the act, but that he gives a man over to his sin in the act, This sufferance implies not favour, but judgement: God never liked *Balaams* Journey, he displeasedly gives way to it.

And now *Balaam* thine opportunity is lost, and thou a lost man: God will now give thee up to thine own heart; *Balaam* after this grows worse and worse; his heart is given up and hardned, 'tis steeped in sottishnesse, for an Angel stops him with a drawn sword in the way, yet he hath a minde to goe, his Ass doth by miracle speak, and yet he hath a minde to goe, ah *Balaam*! where's thine

thine understanding ? I see now thou art a gone man, forthine Ass is wiser then his Rider, the Ass becomes rational, *Balaam* becomes brutish, when men repell Gods opportunities they become more brutish then the beasts.

5 A man may by one short act of sin bring a long curse upon himselfe and his posterity: As *Ham* when he saw his Father *Noah* drunk, and uncovered in his Tent, Ah what an opportunity lost he now ? had he veiled his fathers nakednesse, and thrown a cloud over it, he had received a blessing : but he goeth and proclaims it to his brethren, and they doe what he should have done ; they covered their Fathers nakednesse, and would not turn their eyes to see it. And *Noah* awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him, and he said, Cursed is *Canaan*, a servant

Gen. 9. 24, 25

D 3

of

(c) Nec enim
tantum hominis
verbum est,
sed Dei; imo
plus & potius
est proberia
quam ultionis
aviditas Ferus
in loc.

(d) Non dubito
filium ejusdem
cum patre inge-
niti fuisse, &
ipsam quoque,
ut patrem ri-
sisse Noe,
Merces.

of servants shall be he unto his bre-
thren. Canaan was Ham's son, Noah
(c) as Gods mouth) prophesieth
a curse upon the son, for the fa-
thers sin; although some thinke
(d) that Canaan first saw Noah na-
ked, and deriding him alone,
called his father to bear him com-
pany in that contempt; Here Ham
is cursed in his son Canaan, and a
curse entailed not only to Canaan,
but to his posterity. Noah prophe-
cies a long series, and chaine of
curses upon Canaan and his chil-
dren: he makes the curse heredi-
tary to the name and nation of the
Canaanites, עֶבֶר עַבְדִּים A servant of
servants shall be he unto his brethren,
that is, the vilest servant: for the
Hebrews expresse the superlative
degree by such a duplication, as
[vanity of vanities] that is, most
vaine, a [song of songs] a most
excellent song: So here, A servant
of servants, that is, the vilest ser-
vant:

vant: Ah heavy and prodigious curse! for the Kernel and quintessence of this curse was spiritual, whereby *Canaan* and his posterity are sealed up for slaves to sin, and excommunicate from the Church of God: what a brave opportunity did *Ham* loose here to get a large and long blessing on himself and his posterity? and this opportunity he lost forever: for the decree is gone forth, [a servant of servants shalt thou be.]

Soule, thy not obeying God in such a nick of time may loose thee thou knowest not what: the doing or not doing of one act may undo thee for ever: See another instance in *Saul* [And thou shalt goe down before me to *Gilgal*, and behold I will come down unto thee to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings, seaven dayes thou shalt tarry till I come to thee and shew thee what thou shalt doe.] And be

1 Sam. 10. 8.

D 4

tarryed

carried seven dayes according to the
 set time that Samuel had appointed,
 but Samuel came not to Gilgal, and
 the people were scattered from him, &
 Saul said, bring hither a burnt offer-
 ing to me, and peace-offerings, and he
 offered the burnt offering; and it came
 to passe that as soon as he had made an
 end of offering the burnt offering, be-
 hold samuel came, and Saul went out
 to meet him, that he might salute him:
 Samuel had bid Saul stay seven
 dayes in Gilgal till he came: six
 dayes he stayeth, and part of the
 seaventh, he had but a little part
 of a day to expect longer; his
 impatience will not give him
 leave, for he offereth Sacrifice be-
 fore Samuel comes, and he had no
 sooner offered sacrifice but Samuel
 came; As soon as he had made an
 end of offering the burnt offering,
 behold Samuel came, and tels him,
 thou hast done foolishly, for now,
 mark the word [now] now would
 the

Verse 10.

13.

the Lord have established thy King-
dome upon Israel for ever: This one
opportunity improved would
have sealed thee the Kingdome;
one act of obedience now, would
have given thee a lasting mercy:
this minute of time would have
got thee a Crown: scarce is *Saul*
warmed in his Kingdome when he
hath even lost it how neer may we
be to a mercy and misse it? Couldst
thou not wait a little longer *Saul*?
Thou wast within an inch of a
Kingdom, within a haire breadth
of an established fruition: *Saul*
waited till the season, and then
brake off: He got nothing by all
his six dayes waiting, because he
watcht not this season: and the
reason is, because though obedi-
ence at all times please God, yet
there is a punctuall and peculiar
season of obedience, wherein he
blesseth: all the other acts of obe-
dience are but preparatory, there
is

is a speciall nick and season of obedience : which crownes with blessing : perseverance is the only grace that crownes a Christian : *Mansel* lived nine hundred ninety and nine years, if he had fallen away from grace at the nine hundred ninety and nine years end, all the good that he had done or got before had been quite forgotten : To obtain a blessing, its not enough to obey God, but we must obey him in that point and nick of time wherein he will give the blessing : as to meet with a friend in a place : its not enough to walk there often : you may walk there a week together, and not meet him, but you must walk there in that nick of time wherein he appoints you the meeting.

6. There is sometimes an opportunity given to receive some gift of the spirit, which if we neglect we shall never have the like again ;

again : as you may see in *Elisha*, when *Elijah* was to leave the world, and to ride in state to heaven in his Coach or bright Chariot, saith he to *Elisha*, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee, and *Elisha* said, I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me, saith *Elijah* thou hast asked an hard thing; nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so : And it came to passe as they still went on, and talked, that behold there appeared a Chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and *Elijah* went up by a whirlwind into heaven, and *Elisha* saw it, &c.

2 Kings 2. 9,
10, 11, 12.

Here was a ticklish opportunity, a slippery opportunity; had *Elisha* missed it, he had never had the like againe : So mayst thou have some gales and runnings in of the spirit, to put thee on to duty,
some

some breathings of the spirit to blow up thy cold heart into holy heats and desires ; some coruscations and beams of the spirit to enlighten thee, some joggings and provokings to heavenly mindedness, some strengthenings of the spirit against a lust proffered thee, which if you put off it may be thou wilt never have the like againe.

7 So when a man doth by providence enjoy the society and company of a godly man, that is, of a choice spirit ; here he hath an opportunity to taste fruit from him, which if he neglect, he may never have the like againe.

A man may by providence be cast upon the company and fruition of such a precious and fruitful Christian, such an experienced Christian, that he shall hardly meet with such a one againe in all his dayes : Ah ! now how shouldst

shouldst thou improve his graces whilest thou hast him? How shouldst thou suck experiences from him? How soon he may be removed from thee, or thou from him, thou knowest not: providence that lends thee him and his graces for a while, may carry him from thee to another place; and then thou loosest thou knowest not what; Ah! how will the losse of such an opportunity afterward damp the spirit!

Thus *Felix*, whilst *Paul* was in prison, enjoyed a rich opportunity; he had a rich Jewel in the Casket of opportunity; Ah what an *improvement* might *Felix* have made of *Paul* all that time? he had been happy *Felix* then; Sometimes he sent for *Paul* and heard him reason of righteousness, temperance and judgement to come but he might have had more of *Paul's* company if he would; he knew

knew not what a price he had in his hand whilst he had *Paul* in his custody ; but he lost his opportunity, for within two years he was removed, and never enjoyed such an opportunity again. And thus I have done with the first part.

Secondly, There are Opportunities of doing good, which if we neglect we may never have the like again.

1. When you are travelling, and fall in upon the way with a man you never saw before, and a thousand to one never shall see again ; here's an opportunity for thee to doe his soul good, to drop heaven into his soul ; which season thou maist never have again to season him with a word of grace : Thus *Philip* falling in with the *Eunuch* whilst he was riding on his way homeward from *Jerusalem*, closed with him, and preached

ched Christ unto him, and was an instrument to save the soule of him whom he never saw before, nor ever after saw again.

Acts 8. 36.
37.

2. When thou art in an office for a time, it may be but one year, thou art clothed with authority and opportunity to doe good, which thou maist never have again. Time will strip thee of thy robes of Authority; thou maist lay down thy life before thou laist down thy Office; if not, yett annuall Offices expire; and fall off of themselves; and when thine authority is gone, thy opportunity is gone: as a man that hath a sword or a staffe in his hand, if his staffe be wrenched out of his hand, he hath lost his opportunity to foile his enemy; so it is when the staffe of authority is passed out of thy hand unto another, thy time is gone.

Felix whilst he was in Office,

was

Act. 24. 27.

was married unto a gallant opportunity to release *Paul* out of Prison, but he did not husband the opportunity, and he was divorced from it for ever, for saith the Text, after two years *Portius Festus* came into *Felix* room, and *Felix* willing to shew the Jewes a pleasure left *Paul* bound.

3 So when a man is dying, upon his death-bed, there you have an opportunity to doe his soul good, which you shall never have again: Thus Christ dropt in grace and good counsell into the thiefe upon the Crosse, the Crosse was his death-bed, which had it Been omitted, the thiefs soul had been lost within a few howres for ever, and the opportunity gone too.

4 So when a friend is in affliction, then thou hast an opportunity to strike whilst the iron is hot, to humble him while he is humbled;

to

to speak a word in season to him while his heart is seasoning and melting: as the Jewes and those easterne people doe plough and sow their ground when the former raine hath softned it, Ah! Sow then (for now is the opportunity) I say, sow the seed of instruction upon a sinners heart; while the former or latter raine of affliction falls upon him, it is a softning time, a melting time; while the raine drops, the earth is soft: He that made a scorne of godlinesse before, will then be of another minde, and hear counsell then if ever he will hear it.

5 So when a godly man is by providence cast into a family, he hath an opportunity to distill showres and drop divine influences, whilst (like a star) he is fixed there, which if he omits, he may never have the like againe: thus Paul being in the Jaylor's family

E

preacht

preacht the Gospel to him, and to his household, and he believed in God (saith the Text) with all his household.

Act. 16. 34. 6 So when a Minister hath interest in the hearts of a people, let him improve it, and look to it, for he knows not how soon the tide may turn, and he never have the like opportunity againe.

2 Tim 4. 2, 3.

7 Rich men, You that are in prosperity and have your sayles fill'd with gales of wealth, you have opportunities to honor God which others have not, and which if you neglect you may suddenly never have the like againe.

8 You have wherewith to maintain and encourage the Gospel, to give to the Saints; and truly it is the highest advance of riches, to make riches an instrument to advance religion. Oh then honour God with thy substance, lay out for God and his Gospel, least

least the Lord, thou knowest not how soon, send a North-wind to blow upon thee, and freez up thy wealth, and then thou maist never have the like tide of opportunity againe. 2 Besides, you have greater opportunities for hearing the word, and praying in your secret closets, then poor men have, who live upon the sweat of their brows: you may be praying when the poor must be labouring for their living, you may be meditating, whilst they must be getting their bread.

If then you, rich ones, see poor men that are necessitated to work hard for a meane living, more lively, more frequent and abundant in duties then your selves are, know now you walke not by rule: where much is given, much is required; and to whom God hath given much, of them he asks the more who are happier, then that are in the Kitchin, or they

E 2

that

that attend upon the Prince?

Ah, you rich and great persons! this is a high favour and transcendent honour, that God hath freed you from inferiour drudgery, to imploy you in more noble services in the Court, while others must serve their occasions; you that have fulnesse of the world, you have fulnesse of time to injoy the Kings presence, and wait upon Christs person in holy duties, and therefore know that you should be more with God then others: Holinesse is your trade, and your closets are your shops, and every day is a Sabbath day to you. Take your opportunities: that may be enough for one which is too little for another; where God gives much opportunities, they must do much for God.

8 A man may have an opportunity to suffer for Christ, which if he neglect he may never have the

the like again: To suffer for Christ is honorable, God will not put this honour upon every one, he puts this honour upon his vessels of honor: he gives grace to a man, and casts him into a vessel of silver or gold, and then throws him into the fire to melt, and suffer for his name: The mettall of that Christian must be silver or gold that can suffer for Christ: a vessel of wood, throw him into the fire, his hoops will fly off, he will breake assunder, & never hold out. The three children that were cast into the fiery furnace, what glorious mould and mettall were they made of? Had they not taken the opportunity to suffer for God, they might never have met with such a one againe.

1 For what a spreading fame and glory of God did their sufferings scatter over all the world? God is acknowledged and adored by *Nebuchadnezzar*, a Decree is

E 3

made

Dan 3. 28, 29.

made that every People, Nation, and Language which speak amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces: Then Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who hath sent his Angel and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the Kings word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any God, except their own God. Therefore I make a Decree that every People, Nation or Language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill, because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort: Here Gods glory shines out of their sufferings, even enemies acknowledge none like Israels God.

Here they found a most glorious

ous opportunity to honour God,
which if they had lost, they might
never have had the like againe;
had they lost this oportunity God
had lost his glory.

2 To honour themselves :
for

I They were no sooner in the
fire, but they met with Jesus Christ
there : Then Nebuchadnezzar the
King was astonied, and rose up in
haste, and spake and said unto his
Counsellors, Did not we cast three men
bound into the midst of the fire? they
answered and said unto the King,
True O King : He answered and said,
Lo, I see four men loose walking in
the midst of the fire, and they have no
hurt, and the forme of the fourth is
like the Son of God : They were
but three that were cast into the
fire, but Nebuchadnezzar saw four
there ; And the forme of the
Fourth was like the Son of God :
Whether it were Jesus Christ the

Dan. 3. 14, 25.

E 4

natu-

Verse 28.
Job 1. 6.

Isai. 43. 3.

naturall Son of God, or an Angel, who are called the Sons of God, here was a great honour; the Angels of the Lord are present with the Saints in their sufferings, and *Jesus Christ* is present with the Saints in their sufferings: *When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the Rivers they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle on thee:* Angels company and Christs company is a wondrous honour: We count it a great honour to have Princes to be our companions; the Saints in their sufferings have Princes for their companions, *Jesus Christ* and his Angels: and thy suffering time is the opportunity to enjoy the company of these Princes and great ones.

2. It was an honour to them, that God should work such a noble

ble miracle for them, as to stop the mouth of the fire, that it could not burn them; And the Princes, Governours and Captains, and the Kings Counsellors being gathered together saw these men upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their heads singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them: Ah wonderfull! So did God honour his servants: the fire still retained its property of burning, and yet could not burn them: the power and (e) property of burning was not taken from the fire, for then it had been no miracle: what miracle is it for that thing not to burne which cannot burne? The miracle therefore did not consist in taking away the naturall power of burning from the fire, but in this that when the fire had the greatest heat and power of burning, yet it could not burn them: The fire had its full power and

(e) Impossibile est propria perfectia vel ad momentum temporis suis subjectis separari. Kecherman log. lib. 1.

Num urendi vis ab igne esset sublata miraculum plane nullum a Deo fuit Editum; quid enim miraculi sit eum rem non urere, qua non possit urere? Non ergo in tollenda ab igne urendi facultate miraculum consistebat. sed in eo quod cum vim prendi maximā

quis iste Babi-
onius obtine-
ret, ut illa fuit
divinitus impe-
dita, ne se exe-
reret, ut quidem
statim post exe-
ruit absument
eos qui in for-
nacem eandem
inijcerantur.
Kecker ibid.

and property to burn, but could not exercise it : what an honour was it to walke safe in the midst of the fire ? How did God magnify them, that they should be in the fire and yet be safe from the fire ? the fire doth not kil them but kisse them : the fire doth not consume them, but court them ; & denies it selfe, to give them courteous entertainment : they walke in the fire as in a pleasant aire : what honours are these put upon poor creatures ! they were bound hand and foot, when they were cast into the fire, and yet Nebuchadnezzar sees them walk, the fire had heat to burn their bonds, but not power to touch their bodies : Had they mist this oportunitie of suffering they had missed of this honor

3 Their suffering was the Churches honour and advantage: it won great respe & and honour to the Jewish Church and Religi-

no

on : *Nebuchadnezzar* makes a Decree that no people shal speak any thing amisse of the God of *Sbdrach Mesbach and Abednego* ; Now their God comes into request with the King himselfe, and their deliverance flying abroad upon the wing of fame, makes their God famous, and their Religion famous & their people the Jews famous. How many taunts and derisions cast daily at the Jewes for their worship, were suppressed by the severity of this Law? Without doubt this Decree was of speciall use for the comfort of the Jewes, they had a sweet, calm, and Halcion time of peace and serenity upon it ; Ah ! what honor and advantage brought they to the Church by taking this opportunity of suffering?

4 And did not their suffering and their deliverance (think ye) strengthen the weak faith of their distressed

distressed brethren the poor Jews,
Did it not inspire them with co-
rage, and root them deeper in the
love of their Religion? How ma-
ny *Heathens* and *Chaldeans* might
this great miracle of deliverance
work home to the true God? Sure-
ly *Nebuchadnezzars* Decree made
the learning of God famous a-
mong the *Gentiles*, a special help
to conversion; as we may see in
the three *Magi*, or wise men.

Ah my beloved! your suffer-
ings may be the conversion of
others; How willing would we
be to preach a Sermon if we knew
it would be the conversion of
some Soul; Let me tell you that
thy suffering for Christ may be
the best Sermon that ever thou
preachedst al thy life long, & win
more upon souls, then all the Ser-
mons thou didst preach in all thy
life; as we say, that to live wel is
the best preaching, I say also, to
suffer

suffer well is the best preaching;
To suffer for godliness is the most
powerfull preaching of godliness.
He that can suffer best for *Jesus*
Christ, is the best preacher of *Jesus*
Christ: the best sufferer is the best
Preacher.

Ah you Saints! this way you
may all be Preachers: let your
lives preach, and let your suffer-
ings preach *Jesus Christ*; loose not
your opportunities of suffer-
ing.

I am sure also they will in-
crease your future glory: every
suffering will be a graine put into
the scale of your heavenly glory,
to make it more weighty: For our
light affliction which is but for a mo-
ment, worketh for us a far more ex-
ceeding and eternal weight of glory:
Oh! be for ever contented to
have fellowship with *Jesus Christ*
in all his sufferings; It is said
that the Saints have grace for
grace

grace with *Jesus Christ*, be content also to have suffering for suffering with *Jesus Christ*, you shall also have glory for glory with him: if you have suffering for suffering, you shall also have glory for glory with him; Ah then / Loose not your opportunities of suffering for *Jesus Christ*; if you loose your opportunity of suffering, you loose a part, a beame of your glory, your glory in heaven will be so much the darker.

9. You that are young men, that are the twigs and branches of youth, you have blossomes of opportunities growing on you, which if you neglect you shall never have the like againe; There are oportunities that are married to youth, which if you sever can never be united againe; you have strength to serve Christ, which old age hath not; you have yet

no cares of the world in your heads to keep out heavenly contemplations; you are yet scarce in the world, and therefore have not much of the world in you: Oh drinke in heaven, before you drinke in the cares of the world into your thoughts. Fill your thoughts first with God before you fill them with the world: fill your Sayles with the gales of Christ, before they are filled with the aery vanities of the creature; you have a great deale of your time before you, when old men have their time behind them, gon and past, and but a little of it left before them.

10 So there is an opportunity sometimes to save a whole Church which if we neglect we may never have the like again; Such an opportunity came before *Hester*, which if she had not lock't it in the face, and embraced it, all the
Jewes

Hester 3. 9.
10, 11.

all the Jewes had been cut off at
own blow by *Hamans* policy : He
had got the Kings Decree that the
thing should be done, *If it please*
the King let it be written that they
may be destroyed, and the King took
his Ring from off his hand, and gave
it unto Haman, and said unto Haman,
the silver is given unto thee, the people
also to do with them as it seemeth good
to thee ; The signet-Ring did re-
present the Kings authority and
name; and therefore when one
gave his Ring to another, he gave
his power over to him to do what
he would in his name ; as *Pharoah*
took his Ring off from his hand,
and put it upon *Josephs* hand, that
Joseph might in the Kings name
signe Decrees as Viceroy of *Ægypt*
and *Alexander* when he was sick
and lay speechlesse, and saw no
hopes of life, took his Ring from
his finger and gave it to *Perdiccas*
to signifie (as is thought) that
'twas

'twas his mind that *Perdiccas* should succeed him : So *Haman* had got the Kings Ring to signe the fatall Decree, *And letters were* Verse 13.
sent by post into all the Kings Provinces

to destroy, to kill and to cause to perish all Jewes both young and old, little children and women in one day :

here the poor Church was at a dead lift : *Hamans* teeming hopes were

at the birth, nay (as it were) betwixt the womb and the world ;

and now heres an opportunity (now or never) to step in and save

the Church : Save Lord, now or never, *Hester* takes the opportunity,

Who knows saith Mordecai to her, whether thou art come to the Hester 4. 14.

Kingdome for such a time as this ?

Such a time, which carries nothing but death in the womb of it: Such

a time, wherein the Jews, as if all their necks had stood upon one

shoulder, were destined to the blow: at this time *Hester* strangled

F the

the designe, and saved the Church by taking the opportunity, which had she neglected, a thousand to one she her selfe had never escaped to have had the like againe.

11 Sometimes there's an opportunity given to reforme and purge a Land, which if we neglect may never be given againe in our dayes, as you may see in Judges, the first and second Chapter; in the first Chapter there you shall find that the Children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem, but the Jebusites did dwel with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem: Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her townes, and neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: and neither did Zebulun drive out the Inhabitants of Kitron, nor the Inhabitants of Nahalol, but the Canaanites

Judg. 1. 21.
27, 29, 30.

ites dwell among them, and became
Tributaries, & what then? see Judg.
2. 1, 2, 3. An Angel of the Lord came
up from Gilgall to Bochim and said,
I made you to go up out of Egypt, and
have brought you into the Land which
I swore unto your Fathers; and I said,
I will never break my Covenant with
you, and you shall make no league with
the Inhabitants of this Land. you shall
throw down their Alters; but you have
not obeyed my voice [you have not ap-
prehended the season and opportu-
nity, what then? tis lost in your
dayes, and in your sons dayes, for
many generations] For now I will
not drive them out from before you: I
have said it; it is now past cure,
but they shall be as thornes in your
sides, and their gods shall be a snare
unto you, And when the Angel of the
Lord spake these words unto all the
children of Israel, the people lift up
their voice, and wept, and they called
the name of that place Bochim, that is

Weepers : they wept so much, because they had let slip their opportunity, but all their floods of teares could not bring back the opportunity again, nor turne the tide : I pray God this be not *Englands* case ; time was when we had the opportunity to destroy the *Canaanites*, Heresie , Error, Prophanenesse out of the Land : but now the bird of oportunity is fled out of our hand ; She hath taken wing, is fled away and gone ; and I feare me we shall not see her againe in our dayes ; the Scepter of Jesus Christ is the *primum mobile* of all good government, set him up, and his government right, and he will set States right, till this great wheel be set right, all the lesser are like enough to goe wrong, Ah *England!* I am affraid of that Text concerning thee, *Because I would have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy*

thy filthinesse any more, till I
have caused my fury to rest upon
thee.

Let us now make application,
And first then,

Use 1. Neglect not your oppor-
tunities of heaven, make the best
of your souls opportunities, loose
not opportunity for a world: you
have a world of opportunities,
loose not one opportunity
for a world: O you that
have souls to save, save your op-
portunities: oh your souls! oh
your souls! I am afraid of your
souls.

1. If you loose your souls, we
Ministers loose all our labour, and
Christ looseth all his blood that
he hath shed for your soules, and
what account can you give to
God for so much cost? Most of
you doe not value your souls
worth the saving: Many a man
doth prize his Oxe or his Asse

more then some men prize their souls.

2 The Devils have lost their opportunities, will you not take warning by the Devils? if you will not take your opportunities you will shortly be as irrecoverable as the Devils.

3 Opportunities lost cannot be bought againe for gold: As *Abab* could not buy *Naboths* Vineyard of him, *Naboth* would take no money for it; so opportunities lost cannot be bought back again for money; if thou wouldst bid never so high for them, thou canst not have them upon any price; thou canst not pray thine opportunities back againe, thou canst not weep thine opportunities back again, as you may see by *Esaú*, he lost his opportunity, and when afterwards he would have inherited the blessing, he could finde no place of repentance, though he sought it with tears: *Jacob* was

Heb. 12. 17.

was no sooner gone away with the blessing, but *Eſau* comes in with hope of the blessing, the blessing was gone but one minute, and yet cannot be recovered.

4 Every opportunity thou looſeſt thou groweſt worſe & worſe: thou art bad to day, if thou looſeſt this opportunity, thou ſhalt be worſe to morrow: as *Cain*, God converſed with him (as it were) to day, *Why art thou wroth? why is thy countenance fallen, if thou doe well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doeſt not well ſin lyeth at the door:* but he was not bettered by this opportunity, and preſently he grew worſe upon it, for the next thing he did was, *he talked with his brother Abel and ſlew him.*

Gen. 4. 6, 7.

Verſe 8.

5 Salvation, which theſe opportunities carry in their womb, is a transcendent birth, a blessing of the firſt magnitude: who would

F 4

not

not belaved? all things else are but shadows and trifles, to this reality called *Salvation*.

*Ista divitia nec
vera sunt nec
vestra.*

Those are the sons of wisdom that contend for substance, for God, for heaven : God is not a thing indifferent, and, *Jesus Christ*, is no circumstance : Honors, ease, worldly profits and pleasures, all these, these I say, are in their nature things indifferent, and being compared and put in the scale with Christ, are lesse then things indifferent, even toyes, dreames, losse, dung, meer nothings, at best but fading things, that passe away as a picture drawn upon the Ice, which soon vanisheth : They are meer accidents, nay separable accidents, that may be taken from the subject without its hurt, a man may spare them and yet be happy ; but God is the Essence of the Soul, the eternal Entity of our happinesse, *This is life eternall to know*

Joh. 17. 3.

know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

6 It may be (O Sinner) that art now in thy sins, it may be this very day, even this particular Sermon, may be thy day, that if thou repent not at this very Sermon thou losest eternall life for ever.

Thus *Jesus Christ* ended the day of grace on the Scribes and Pharisees even in the very Sermon time whilst Christ was preaching to them, they were delivered up to hardnesse of heart.

7 In a word, to passe by *Jesus Christ* carrieth with it the most surpassing wrath: to disrespect the offer of mercy ushers in the greatest misery. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.* That is, you shall not escape so, you shall not passe with an ordinary doome upon you.

Heb. 2. 3.

Sinners! opportunity attends you, Christ is yours if you'l have him:

him : the Lord Jesus is at your service, if you will imbrace him : God sends up and downe the world to offer Salvation, hence that phrase [*my salvation is gone forth*] Mercy waits on you, and kneels to you, and does obeysance to your souls ; when you are running from it, mercy runs after you to catch you and imbrace you ; Ah how long hath free grace stood at your doors, waiting your leisure when you would let her in, yet she calls and knocks againe, you may yet be saved, but if you will goe on still, and disrespect mercy, it brings the greatest misery ; The greatest severity goes along with the Gospel ; greatest severity goes along with the greatest mercy.

The Gospel is the greatest mercy that ever saluted the world, and there's the greatest severity with the Gospel that ever came with

with any mercy into the world ;
Men shall be deeper in hel because
heaven was offered them, and they
would not ; All they suffer here
is but typicall of the wrath to
come ; here they but sip of the top
of Gods cup, there they must drink
the dregs, though it be eternity, to
the bottome ; a Sodomite in Hell
shall fare better then the refuser of
Jesus Christ, See *Mat. 10. 14, 15.*
*And whosoever shall not receive you,
nor hear your words, when you depart
out of that house or City, shake off the
dust of your feet ; Verily I say unto you
it shall be more tollerable for the land
of Sodom and Gomorah in the day of
Judgement, then for that City. Is not
here the greatest severity with the
greatest mercy ? So againe, in
Mat. 11. 21, 22. Woe unto thee Cora-
zin, woe unto thee Bethsaida, for if
the mighty works which were done in
you, had been done in Tyre and Sydon,
they would have repented long ago in
Sack.*

Sackcloth and ashes; but I say unto you, it shall be more tollerable for Tyre and Sydon at the day of Judgement then for you. Is not here the greatest severity going along with the greatest mercy?

God can better bear any thing then the contempt of his free grace in the offers of mercy.

More yet; When the Gospel began to be preached; saith the Text, *Now is the Axe layed to the root of the Tree*; Jesus Christ comes with his Basket and his Axe, his Basket to gather fruit, his Axe to cut downe the tree if it will not bear fruit; and is not here the greatest severity with the greatest mercy? If there were a sword on Moses thigh, there is an Axe in Christs hand. *Now is the Axe layd to the root of the tree* [Now] that is, your opportunity is Now, if you passe by this [now] you are gone, for ought I can tell, you are chopt off

off presently. Neglect not the present [Now] least ye be cut off for ever.

8 Consider sin is your dishonour! it doth (f) degrade you. The vesture of mans nature is base and beggarly since it was patched with sin: It is a debasing of the gold to marry it with any mettall of a courser birth, so 'tis a dishonour to man to match his golden nature (so God at first made it holy and righteous) I say, to match thy golden nature to base-borne dross, to low-borne sin, which derives its pedigree from hell.

None but *Jesus Christ* is a fit match for the soule of man, take the opportunity then, and make choice of *Jesus Christ*, Espouse thy soul to him, & keep the marriage-knot inviolate with him, *Rp. 7. 4.*

9 Come in quickly, take the opportunity to come in presently to *Jesus Christ*, least your sins (be fore

Match. 3. 10.

(f) *Munditia enim necessaria est ad hoc, quod mens Deo applicetur quia mens Humana inquinatur ex hoc quod inferioribus rebus conjungitur sicut qualibet Res ex immixtione peioris sorescit, ut argentum ex immixtione plumbi.*
Aquin. sum. 22aq. 8. 1. ar. 8. Corp.

(g) De uno peccato enim in aliud, ex una turpitudine & stultitia in aliam ruerunt. Ita Atas parentum peior avis tulit, Hos nequiores, mox daturos progeniem viciofio rem. Neque tantum a peccato ad peccatum, sed ab errore & stultitia ad opressa & bestia ad insaniam & corruptionem ruerunt, ac rationis Everfionem procediunt. Cocceius, ad 2 Tim. 3.

fore you are aware) ripen too fast, and you be cut down you know not how soon. Sins (g) multiply; one sin will shortly multiply into many; they are like circles in a pond, one circle begets another, so doth one sin beget another, a lesser begets a greater, as in a case of staires, one stair is a step to another, so every sin is a stair to help up to higher and worse sins.

It is wonderfull to behold the great flames bred out of small sparks of sin, how one sin hatched a greater; sin is like a whirlpool, which first sucks in one part, and then another, and never desists untill it draws in and plungeth the whole body.

10. A man may performe duties of Religion after his day of grace is set upon him. You think that as long as a man performes duties, and doth many good things, his day of grace is not past; My

My beloved, observe me, a man may come to Church, performe religious duties, doe many good things, have many meltings upon his heart, after his day of grace is past & gon: as *Saul* went on in duties of Religion as wel after *Samuel* had pronounced the Lords doom upon him as before; how many times was he offering sacrifice to the Lord, after the Prophet had told him that he was a man rejected? how many good speeches came from him? what meltings sometime fell in upon his soule? as if there were hopes of him, and yet a lost man, his opportunities were past; close then, close presently with the opportunities of Jesus Christ.

Use 2. My second Use shall be to set out unto you the excellency and Majesty of Gods opportunities, that you may stand in awe and reverence of them, and by no means

*Mysteria re-
menda.*

means slight them or neglect them : Mysteries are dreadfull, we honour them ; *There are mysteries in Gods opportunities.* My beloved, there are these three characters of mysterie and excellency engraven upon Gods opportunities ; It may be some may think of and adde more, but I at present observe three characters of mysterie and excellency upon Gods opportunities.

1. They are easie.
2. They are sudden and unexpected.
3. Sometimes they come beside our intention.

First, Gods opportunities are easie, they bring great matters to birth with easie travell ; they bring hard things to passe easily : Oh that this were observed. In Gods opportunity it is an easie thing to believe, to repent, to subdue a sin, and to overcome a temp.

temptation ; as it is an easie matter for the Ship to go when she hath the winde to fill her sayls. Every thing is done easily in Gods opportunity, whether it be to save a soul, or to destroy a soul ; because God in his opportunity makes all things concur and brings circumstances together to strike up the action suddenly ; you shall see it.

1. In the ruine of a man, in the destruction of a man : when 'tis Gods opportunity to destroy a man, what easie way will he make for't ? As *Saul*, when Gods time came that he must perish, he slew himselfe, there was no difficulty in the work, he fell himselfe upon his sword, as the stone doth to its center : How easily was *Jericho* taken ? when the Priests blew the Trumpets, and the people shouted, the walls fell down flat of themselves : How easily

1 Sam. 31. 4.

G

was

was Pharoah and his Army destroyed in the red Sea? the Sea was divided, and a way made for him, that he might not stand upon't, but run voluntary into the womb of death; Oh the efficacy of Gods opportunities! How easily did Goliath fall, what stirrs and blusterings did he act a little before upon the stage of pride and boasting, making a challenge to all Israel? but when Gods opportunity comes how easily is he slain? And therefore the Scripture speaks this with an Emphasis, *So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone and smote the Philistine, and slew him, but there was no sword in the hand of David.*

2. So Gods opportunities work good for men easily, they bring great matters of good to passe with no difficulty: When 'tis Gods opportunity that David shall

shall take possession of his King-
dome it falls into his mouth (as it
were) not onely *Saul*, but all his
sons (that might stand as so many
screens between *David* and the
Crown) are taken out of the way.
The house of *Judah*, they of them-
selves, come and annoint *David*
King over them. Then *Abner*,
Saul's Generall of his whole Ar-
my, displeased with *Ishboseth* re-
volts to *David*, and all the Tribes
come to *Hebron* to annoint *David*
King over *Israel*. Doe you see?
this great work is done to his
hand.

So in Gods opportunities it is
an easie thing to believe and re-
pent, *Acts* 16. 14. *Luke* 19. 6. *1*
Kings 19. 20.

Ah my beloved ! the ease of
believing and repenting attends
a peculiar opportunity of Gods
own vouchsafing, in which he
doth more readily work then at
other times. G 2 How

How shall I know when 'tis easie for me to believe and repent?

1. When the light of the spirit doth flash into the eye of thy soul, then thy work is easie, as when the light of the day doth dart its rayes in at the windows of thy Chamber 'tis easie for thee to read a small print. Thus when a light from Heaven did shine upon *Paul*, and shine into *Paul*, how easie did his work come off? Lord what wilt thou have me to doe?

2. When thy heart is made combustible and ready to take fire; as when the tinder is dry 'tis easie to light a candle, the least spark that falls on it takes fire, and when the fire is combustible, it is an easie matter to kindle a fire, it burns presently: So when thy heart is softned it easily takes the impression of the seal upon it, and when thy thoughts are stir'd up
will

and made combustible, 'tis an easie matter to kindle them into a fire of repentance, as in the *Acts*, when they were pricked in the heart, they said, *Men and brethren what shall we doe? Repent* (saith Peter) and they took presently. Acts 2.

3. When thine affections and desires are upon the wheel, then any work is easie, as when a load is upon the wheel 'tis drawn easily, whereas if you should go about to lug it along upon the ground it comes on heavily; and therefore the Lord pursuing *Pharoah*, took off his Chariot wheels, and they drave on heavily: So when God puts thine affections upon the wheel, and sets them a going, then 'tis easie for thee to doe great matters, and therefore observe thine opportunity.

Secondly, Gods opportunities are sudden and unexpected: they come upon us without prepara-

G 3

tion;

tion ; God doth not send us word before hand, when he will visite us and come to us, as sometimes we send to a friend that we will dine with him, or speak with him at such an hour ; but Gods opportunities come suddenly upon us in the twinkling of an eye, before we be aware, when we know nothing of it, and the spirit rusheth in upon a man, and gives him no notice before hand ; Thus Christ came and called *Matthew* [*Follow me*] on a sudden, whilst he was sitting at the receipt of Customs, *And he arose & followed him.*

Some poor souls have sent up many a Prayer to heaven for assurance, and it hath not come, and they poor creatures have thought that God hath not regarded them all the while, and then, on a sudden, assurance hath come when they lookt not for it : Ah dear father, how many mercies from thee

thee have come to us uninvited !
thy preventing grace and mercy
doth always visit us uninvited ;
we send not for it, it comes freely
to us.

Thirdly, Gods opportunities
come besides our intention, they
come sometimes when we aime
not at them : We stumble upon
heaven, when we are seeking
something else ; as a man that
digged in his garden onely to set
roots and plants, and found a pot
of gold there ; and as *Saul* went
to *Samuel* to enquire for his Fa-
thers Asses, and found a King-
dome. This was besides his in-
tention, he sought one thing and
found another, his poor Asses
were his intention, but a Crown
was the object he met with in ex-
ecution. Oh the mysteries of
opportunity ! 'Tis so many times
in the matters of heaven, *I am*
found saith God of them that sought

me not. Many a soul findes Heaven besides his intention : How strangely doe some meet with a Commission ? they meet with heaven and grace by accident (as it were) they go to a place onely to seek health or food, something for the body, and there they light upon (besides their intention) salvation for their souls ; as the lame man seeing *Peter* and *John* asked an almes, there was all his intention, and met with a cure both of body and soul : and the woman of *Samaria* came to the Well for water, and there found a Christ ; it was an accident to her to meet Christ there : Gods opportunity comes upon her besides her intention : Ah gracious God ! that she should come for water that very hour when Christ was there, not before nor after, but that very hour when Christ is there ; she came for water which was but puddle, and found

a Spring of life : So the Mariners that took *Jonah* into their Ship, they received him onely for the fare, he payd them, that was all their intention, their fare and pay for carriage was all their aime, but they met with a better fare, conversion to the true God, *verse 16. Then the men (they were Heathens) feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the Lord [that is, to the true God, not to Neptune but to the Lord] and made vows.* So *Moses* went to mount *Horeb* onely to keep his Fathers sheep, but there he met with God in the burning bush. Thus you see Gods opportunities are cloathed with stately robes of mystery upon them, behold them therefore with holy fear and reverence.

Jonah 1: 3.

Use 3. My third Use shall give the meeting to tender souls, who will be ready from the breasts of this doctrine to suck in fears and scruples,

scruples, giving up their opportunities for gon : If this be so, then we have lost our opportunities.

Obj. 1. I am an old sinner, and have stood it out all my days hitherto against Jesus Christ, he hath often called me, & I have often refused him.

Answ. Yet thou art not in hell, thou art yet on this side the grave : O praise mercy and free grace, that thou art not yet in the center of hell : Thou canst not say that the oyle of opportunity is spent, as long as thou hast a vessell more, a day, or year yet more left to receive it ; the widows oyle ran still as long as there was a vessell to receive it : Thou canst not say that opportunity is done, till life be done : God hath many opportunities, though many are lost, yet all are not past. Thou sayst thou hast lost some opportunities, but God hath many opportunities in store : Indeed,

deed, if God had but one opportunity for thee and no more, thou wert gone, as *Eſau* ſaid unto *Iſaac*, *Hath thou but one bleſſing of my Father?* But God hath many bleſſings, he hath many mercies, and therefore many opportunities for loſt ſouls, he doth not give off for many denyalls; after many refusalls God comes on again, and woos afreſh: he hath a treasury of opportunities, a quiver full of opportunities, and if one arrow of mercy be ſpent, if more arrows of opportunities be loſt, and thrown away upon thee, he hath more yet to ſhoot at thee, and more yet; Oh that God would now draw out an arrow of conversion, and hit thy ſoul with it! What though God hath bent his bow, and ſhot many an arrow, many a Sermon at thee, and miſſed? Yet he will ſhoot again, he can ſhoot and hit, he is rich in mercies

Gen. 27. 38.

mercies, and therefore rich in opportunities.

Obj. 2. *Oh, but I have left my first love, I have abated in my flame of love to God, and his word, and the power of godlinesse; and is my opportunity yet before me to recover? is it not lost?*

Answ. No, it is not lost, thine opportunity yet is not gone, as you may see in Rev. 2. 4, 5. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Observe, thou that hast decayed in the heat of thy first love, God hath somewhat against thee, he hath a quarrell with thee, and therefore awake with all speed, for God hath somewhat against thee, but yet thine opportunity is not gone: for saith God in the next words; *Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe thy first works*, there's yet opportunity that shines on thee, the Sun is not yet set, though it be

be going down : and if thou wilt remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and make haste to rise, God will rather make the Sun to stand still as he did in *Joshuahs* time) [the sun of oportunity shal rather stand stil in the orbe of time, then that thou shalt loose thy soul, and therefore looke about thee.

Obj. 3. Oh but I am grown luke-warme in religion, which is the worst temper of all the rest, I care not which end goes forward.

Ans. Christ will afford thee opportunities yet, as you may see in the Church of *Laodicea*, *Rev.* 3.

15. I know thy works [I know what they are and utterly dislike them] thou art neither hot nor cold,

Thou art neither an open enemy, nor yet truly zealous of my Gospel, ver.

16. Therefore because thou art luke warm I will spue thee out of my mouth: as tepid and luke-warme water doth provoke the stomach to it out again: So will I (saith God)

spew

Verse 20.

spew thee and thy profession out,
 it, is so loathsome to me. Observe
 (thou luke-warm Christian) thou
 art in a sad and dangerous condi-
 tion, God cannot bear with thy
 profession long; as the stomach
 cannot hold luke-warme water
 long within it, yet thine oppor-
 tunities are not yet gone, for saith
 Christ, *Behold I stand at the door, and
 knock, if any man hear my voice, and
 open the door, I will come in unto him,
 and sup with him and he with me;*
 though thou art luke warme and
 deservest with thy profession to
 be spewed out of my mouth, yet I
 stand at the door and knock: Christ
 was going; (O observe thou luke-
 warm Christian, and therefore
 saith he) *I stand at the door and
 knock,* but (saith he) I'll pause a
 while before I goe, I'll stay a little
 and then goe, I am unwilling to
 leave thee yet, though thou shut
 me out I will not yet be gone,
 though

though the door be lockt against me, yet I'll knock a while; for this phrase shews that Christ was stay-
ed from entring in presently the
doors being shut against him; yet
he would stand there waiting,
though you be all asleep within,
yet I wil see whether I can knock
you up: The opportunity waited
still upon them.

*Obj. 4. But God seems to have cast
me off into a Sea of sadnesse and deser-
tion: he hath thrown me over Ship-
board out of his presence into a depth
of despaire; I sinke, I sink under his
anger, I feare me I shall never recover,
I am so drowned in the Ocean of his
frownes, his waves are gone over my
Soule.*

*Ans. A man may think him-
selfe gone, and yet his opportunity
not gone, he may think himselfe
past helpe, and yet his opportuni-
ty not past; he may say, God hath
cast me off, I shall never recover
more,*

more, never see the face of God more, and yet opportunity shews its face againe, and smiles upon him. I will give you a strange instance, *Jonah* in the Whales belly, he had sinned, highly against the Lord, like a Runagate who fled from his Masters service, and when he was upon the Sea, a tempest pursueth him, which would not give him over; a Lot to discover the malefactor is cast, and it falls upon *Jonah*; The Marriners they cast him over Ship-board: here was a fearfull case, to be cast over Ship-board with a guilty conscience: how did he fall into the Sea, that had a Sea of terrour in him? Well; he is cast in, and a Whale swallows him, in whose belly he is lodged for three dayes and three nights, after such a manner as was never heard of before: how perplexed was his state think you? a man drowned and not drowned;

drowned ; devoured, but not digested ; alive, but yet as dead ; ah what a dying soul had he in the living Fish ! expecting every minute the fearefull dissolution of his Soul from his body ; for he was under horror of conscience, now lying on him for his sin, & dreadful conflict of Spirit, as if God had forsaken him, and given sentence on him, for you shall read, some such were his expressions, *Thou hast cast me into the deep, that is, the Sea ; then I said, I am cast out of thy sight, my Soul fainted within me,* Here *Jonah* thought his opportunity was gone, but the Whale brings him safe to the shore, the Whales belly was a place of safety, a Sanctuary to him, had not the Whale received him, he might have been drowned, for he could not swim to the shore. Ah thou poor dejected soul ! know that God can be angry, and yet love thee ; he can throw thee into

Jonah 2. 3, 4.

H

the

Jonah 2. 2.

the belly of despaire, and make thee live in it, as the child doth in the wombe, the Mothers belly is the Babes Sanctuary, the childe lyes safe in the womb, so shalt thou lye safe in the belly of despaire, God will make the belly or womb of despaire to travel in birth till thou art delivered, and therefore doe as *Jonah* did, beleeve in the midst of despaire, pray unto the Lord, cry unto him out of the Whales belly, *Out of the belly of hell* (saith *Jonah*) *I cryed and thou hearest my voice*; Ah, blessed word! God will hear thee when thou art at the worst; if thou couldest pray in hell, and repent in hell, wert thou in hell, if thou couldst beleeve there, God would hear thee there; a sweet word to a despairing soule: *Jonah* in the Whales belly, said, *Yet will I look again toward thy holy Temple*; God will give thee leave to look up to him though thou art in the bottom of destruction.

on: *I am cast out of thy sight* (said *Jonah*) yet *I will looke againe toward thy holy Temple*? A soule is never so forsaken of God, but he may look up to his God; though thou art cast out of his sight, yet he will give thee leave to look upon him: ah thou forsaken soule! a look from thee will pierce his bosome, a mournfull look from the childe wounds the breast of an angry father; though the child dares not send out a word, yet a mournfull and longing look conquers his Fathers heart: Art thou forsaken of God? yet thine opportunity is not gone, dart a look upon him, if thou canst not pray to him, yet look upon him: God looks to see whether thou wilt look upon him he waits to be gracious, thou waitest to be comforted, he waits to comfort thee.

lsa. 30. 18.

5 Mans extremity is Gods opportunity: when thou art most ready to perish, then is God most

H 2

ready

ready to save : God ordinarily doth not save in danger, but in extremity of danger : when 'tis at the worst with thee, then 'tis Gods opportunity to help thee, as the woman that had the bloody issue, her extremity was Christs opportunity ; She had a wasting disease upon her, and time added to it ; twelve long years had she withered and languished under it ; besides the tediousnesse, her disease must needs get head by continuance, yet more to mend the matter, poverty (which is another disease) was super-added to her sicknesse (she had spent all that she had upon Physicians) her extremity now swells great, she hath two evils at once upon her, two unsufferable evils, though she were sick, yet her wealth (as long as she had it) would have maintained and succoured her in her sicknesse, but now want doth pinch her no lesse then her distemper, and helps to
make

make her perfectly miserable: she is now perfectly miserable, weak and sick, and nothing to refresh her in her weaknesse: had she spent all and gained her health, it had been well enough, but alas, she hath beggered her selfe, undone her state, and her body, & never the better, her mony was wasted not her disease. Now her extremity is at the height, what then? her extremity is Christs opportunity; when her case is most desperat she is healed. *If I can but touch the hem of his garment I shall be whole.* So the widow of Sarepta; *Elijah sent to her by God to be sustained by her: when he comes he sustaines her, she is sustained by him: for when he comes and asks her food, bring me I pray thee a morsell of bread in thine hand, she tels him, as the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a Cake, but an handfull of meal in a barrell, and a little oyle in a Cruise, and behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in.*

H 3

and

and dresse it for me and my Son, that we may eat it and dye. She was now upon the borders of extremity: It was high time for the Lord to send the Prophet to her, for (poor Soule) she was now making her last meal: after one meane morsel she was yeelding her selfe over to death, she was now going to eat her last, that she might dye: and what then? truly her extremity was Gods opportunity, Feare not said Elijah to her, goe and doe as thou hast said; make me a little Cake first, and bring it to me, and after make for thee and thy son; for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the Barrell of meal shall not wasie, neither shall the Crosse of oyl faile untill the day that the Lord sendeth raine upon the earth. What a shewre of comfort was here? she was going to eat her last and dye, and God sends the Prophet to her to provide for her the whole famine: How opportunely doth God provide succour to our distressed

resses / It is his glory to helpe at a pinch, to begin where we have given over, that his mercy may be so much the more welcome by how much it is the lesse look't for.

6 Though I have lost time, yet (say) Lord thou hast not lost time, thou wert before all time, and canst set time yet before me: My losse of time doth not put thee to a losse.

Obj. 7. But will God be a loser by me? I have lost him abundance of glory which I might have done him, had I improved my opportunities: In my loosing my opportunities, God hath lost a great deal of his glory.

Ans. 1. God will be content to sit downe by the losse if thou wilt but come in now: Oh transcendent mercy / he will loose a great part of his glory rather then loose thy soul, for he knows he can bear the losse better then thou canst.

H 4

2 What

2 What he looseth of his glory by the one way, he gaines another way, in pardoning of thee; he counts it his glory to pardon thee, as the Holy Ghost, saith, *It is a mans glory to passe over a transgression.* In pardoning the sins thou hast lived in for a time, he will gain glory to himselfe beyond all time; Thou hast sinned against him some years, and so he hath lost his glory by thee for some years, but if he pardon thee thou wilt glorify him (wilt thou not?) for ever.

PIO. 19. 11.

3 What ever glory thou hast lost him, he hath it all made up in Jesus Christ: come in now then and serve him cheerfully in Christ, doe more for him in a little time, then thou hast done against him in a long time.

Obj. 8. *But I have prayed long, and waited a great while, and the Lord doth not hear nor answer me, and therefore my opportunity; is past when*

when God hath done bearing; prayer
the opportunity is past.

Ans. 1. This doth not argue
that thine opportunity is gone;
but that God doth not answer
thee as soon as thou askest: Thine
opportunity is not past, but one-
ly God takes his leasure to hear
thee when he pleaseth: the op-
portunity is not past, but God
makes thee stay a while before he
answers; the Lord doth not al-
wayes time his answers to the
swiftnesse of our expectations.

2. Gods delays should make
thee set on him with greater
strength; and his putting thee off
should make thee put on afresh
with stronger violence; as the
cold weather makes the fire burn
hotter, so Gods slacknesse should
make thee more hot and earnest
in prayer; and (by an holy An-
tiperistasis) be kindled from his
coldnesse: Thus 'tis with the
men

men of the world, when Balak sent messengers unto Balaam to come unto him, and curse the People Israel; Balaam denyed him, and sent him word back, that God would not give him leave to come: what then? saith the Text, Balake sent again certain Princes more, and more honourable then they, so little is Balak discouraged with one refusall, that he sent so much the stronger message, More Princes and more honourable; ah that we could be so importunate for our good, and with our God! a denyall doth but whet the desires of vehement Suitors: Why are ye faint in spirituall things, when ye are not denyed but delayed? doth God put thee off? send up more Prayers, and more honourable again to him.

3. And therefore when after much seeking thou meetest not
with

Numb. 22. 15.

with peace and assurance, doe not say thine opportunity is past, but rather say, thine opportunity is not yet come, or thine opportunity is yet to come, For yet a little time, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Heb. 10. 37.

How shall I know mine opportunity is yet to come?

1. When thou livest in expectation, when thou standest upon thy watch tower to see what he will say unto thee.

2. When thou waitest in the use of means, when thou wilt not leave the use of means: when thou stickest by the Pool of Bethesda, as the lame man did, that had a disease eight and thirty years, there he came to be healed, but he was still prevented, because when he was going down into the water, another always stepped down before him; yet there he stayed, he knew there was the place

Hab. 2. 1.

place and means of healing, and from thence he would not go; if he would lie any where he would lie there: and was his opportunity lost, though he had waited long, and been put by often? (this is the very doubt) No surely, Christ visits him at last, there he waited in the use of means, and rather then fail he shall be healed without means.

3. When the Fig-tree blossomes, then thine opportunity is yet to come, nay 'tis at hand: when any blossomes of goodnesse any buds and beginnings of a work appear, any breathings of soul in thee after Christ, then thine opportunity is at hand; as Christ said, *Learn a Parable of the Fig-tre, when his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, know that Summer is nigh; and therefore cherish every blossome of grace, though never so tender in thee.*

Let

Mat. 24. 32.

Let not a *May* frost nip them : Be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in : When your doors, your souls begin to lift up themselves ever so little after Christ, the King of glory is coming in.

Obj. 9. But you bid us take the opportunity, and come in now to Jesus Christ, and believe in him and repent, and come out of sin : alas you bid us doe what we cannot doe, we cannot believe, nor repent, nor come out of sin, or come to Jesus Christ of our selves.

Ans. 1. You are to believe that you cannot believe of your selfe, or repent of your selfe, or come out of sin by your own strength : and you are not therefore the farther from Christ, in that you are so far from your selves, nay you are nearer to Jesus Christ. The farther you go out of your selves, and out of your
own

own strength, the nearer you are gone to Jesus Christ : when you seriously and feelingly say that you cannot believe of your selves, this is the first seed of faith, I say, to believe that you cannot believe of your selves is the first seed of faith : you must first believe your own weaknesse, that you may have power from Christ to believe in Christ : Is there ever a poor soul then in this Congregation, that cryes out, I cannot come out of sin of my selfe? this is the first work and step unto Jesus Christ, to receive strength from him to come out of sin : dost thou say thou canst not come out of sin of thy selfe? Now thou art the farther from thy selfe, and the nearer to Jesus Christ : They whom Christ helps, he makes them first see themselves helpless; Jesus Christ gives strength to them, whom he makes

makes to see their own nothingness : they that say they cannot believe, Jesus Christ is in the way to make them believe : They that say, Lord I cannot overcome my sin, Jesus Christ becomes their Conquerour for them ; thy nothingness shall set out his power, *For my strength (saith he) is made perfect in weaknesse.* 2 Cor. 12. 9.

2. And again, whereas thou sayest, I bid thee doe what thou canst not doe, thou canst not repent, nor come out of sin of thy selfe, I answer and tell thee, *God offers his hand with thee to the work,* he does not onely offer thee work to doe, but he offers his hand with thee to the work ; while he bids thee believe, his hand shall be with thee to make thee believe : This is the excellency and kindnesse of the Covenant of grace, when the Gospel bids thee leave sin, it puts in thee a new nature,

nature, that is contrary to sin, to hate it more then hell; If a man (to whom thou owest so much) bid thee pay him a thousand pounds, and give thee the thousand pounds in thy hand to pay him, now it is easie. Jesus Christ in the Gospell doth not onely say to thee, pay me what thou owest me. I am thy Saviour, believe in me, I come down from heaven to die for thee, come out of sin to serve me; I bought thee with a price, pay me down thy selfe; thy service which thou owest me. I say Jesus Christ doth not onely thus bid thee (poor sinner) believe in him, and come out of sin, but he is ready to give thee his grace and strength to make payment. *A new heart will I give thee, and a new spirit will I put into thee:* and therefore doe not say absolutely, I cannot believe, or I cannot come out of sin, for Jesus Christ

Christ is ready to give thee thy thousand pounds thou owest him; that thou mayst pay him out of his own stock; that thou mayst believe out of his treasury, that thou mayst come out of sin by his grace and mercy; The Lord Jesus offers his hand with thee to the work: as *Bernard* tells us of Pope *Eugenius*; that meeting with a poor but honest Bishop, he secretly gave him certain Jewels wherewith he might present him: So Jesus Christ will give thee the Jewells of faith and repentance wherewith thou mayst present him: If God did not furnish us, we should have nothing wherewith to honour him: The Father that gave thee Christ will give thee faith to receive Jesus Christ; and Jesus Christ that gave thee himselfe, will give thee his spirit to draw thee to himselfe.

I

How

How shall we know our opportunities ?

I will lay down but two things before you.

1. Consult with the Lord : as it is said of the children of Israel, that when the Gibeonites deceived them with a wile, and they spared their lives, whom they should have destroyed, the Text saith, *They asked not counsell at the mouth of the Lord ;* they had an opportunity here put into their hands to destroy the Gibeonites, but they missed it, because they did not consult with the Lord : do but compare the seventh verse with the fourteenth, and you shall see how right a man may guesse of a thing sometimes, and yet want a clear light and discovery of it, because he doth not advise with the Lord ; in the seventh verse, *Said the men of Israel to the Hivites, peradventure you dwell amongst us, and how shall we make league with you?*

Joshua 9. 14.

you? here the Israelites did guesse
 aright, it was past (a peradventure)
 for they did live among them; and
 therefore could not make a league
 with them: How right doe they
 hit? how true was their conje-
 cture? Now the lock of oportunity
 was before them, they might have
 laid hold upon it, but they were in
 the dark, and walkt in a cloud, not
 knowing who the Gibeonites were,
 because they asked not counsel at the
 mouth of the Lord, that is, by the high
 Priest putting on the breast-plate
 of judgement wherein was the
 Urim and Thummin, so the reason
 why we know not our opportuni-
 ties is because we consult not with
 the Lord, as he is the maker of time,
 so he is the revealer of time unto
 us: Nay, Gods will to work at such
 a time, is that which makes an op-
 portunity, as suppose a man in a
 curious Apple-tree or Plumb-tree:
 your opportunity to gather, and

carry away fruit is, when it is his will to shake the tree, before or after is no opportunity : you may walke, and watch about the tree, when he will shake down the fruit but when he hath done shaking, your opportunity is done. So the Lord, who is the husbandman of his Church, he hath among all his other trees planted the tree of time, and he himself sits upon the top of the tree (as the God of time, the disposer of time) and when it is his will to shake the tree, then is your opportunity: So that if you would know your opportunities you must consult with the Lord, Lord, when wilt thou shake thy tree? when wilt thou drop down the fruit, that I may gather into my lap?

2 If you would not loose any opportunity, apprehend every one; as *Abraham* by entertaining strangers, entertained Angels unawares: As a man that keeps an Inne, by entertaining

John 15. 1:

1 Cor. 3. 9.

tertaining all travellers that come, oftentimes entertains a Noble man or a Prince: So if thou entertain all opportunities that come, thou shalt at last entertain the noble opportunity, the Angel opportunity, the Prince of opportunities, the Soul-saving opportunity : a thousand to one thou shalt entertain Christ at last : as the Inne at *Bethlem* that entertained all passengers, entertained Christ himselfe there.

Sinners, I told you before, that God will at one hour or other come with a casting command: one command that shall have the casting voice; that if you obey not then, mercy will shut up shop, and trade with you no more, but give you up for ever; and therefore I say now, if you would not loose any opportunity, take every opportunity.

And now give my discourse leave to cast some beams of reflection

upon that worthy Gentleman whom God hath taken from us: 'Tis our duty to speak something of him: Though we bury his body, yet 'tis not fit we should bury his worth in a grave of silence and oblivion, and truly (my beloved) I doe not thinke ye can bury the sweet remembrance of him; He will live a long time after his death, though he be dead, yet he cannot dye, his name cannot expire so soon: Oh! that what good was in him might live after him to give us example: He was an exemplary pattern; when hee's laid in this grave hee'll live above the grave, the sweet smelling spices of his lovely life and conversation will inbalme him, and keep him unperisht in your thoughts many years. I need not blazon his coat of arms (you may see them upon the sable hearse) the worth of his descent or lustre of

of his family, *Et genus & proavos*
& quæ non fecimus ipsi ; you did
 all honour him and know him,
 Mr. *Walcot* of *Walcot* : besides that
 he was honored with the office of
 Justice of peace in his Country,
 and truly I thinke the office in
 some measure received honour
 from him, for he adorned it with
 his vertues : he moved in that
 sphear for many years together,
 in which place both he and that
 worthy Gentleman, now with
 the Lord, M. *Rich. More* of *Linley*
 Esq. (whom for honors sake I can-
 not but revive and mention) In
 which place I say (you all
 know) how they two uniting their
 beames together, refreshed your
 country with the warmth of their
 influence ; executing Justice, re-
 lieving the poor, placing Or-
 phans, punishing offenders, sup-
 pressing the prophanation of
 Sabbaths countenancing the god

And once a
 Member of
 the Parlia-
 ment.

ly, supporting the course of godlineſſe and religion, honoring and backing the faithfull Miniſters of God. I well remember thoſe times, I ſpeak but what ye all know.

He was alſo (having intereſt in ſo many Churches) as great an inſtrument (I think) as any in the Country, to propagate the Goſpell, and preaching of the word.

That excellent man of God Mr. *Pierſon* of *Brampton Brian* had a large room in this Gentlemans heart, and kindled that pious flame in him : and when Mr. *Pierſon* dyed, this flame dyed not in this Gentlemans breſt, till the oyle of his life waſted ; ſurely it was a true work, it laſted in him.

It was his care to get as godly Miniſters, and able as he could ; and how dear was his Miniſters to him ? I dare ſay, next to his wife and children, firſt, he was a father

father to them : they were to oversee the flock, and truly he would oversee them that they should want nothing according to his ability. When they came to visit him, his common quære was, Is it comfortable with you? doe you want? tell me if you do, let me know it? I would not have you discouraged, nor go on drooping in Gods work. I speak but truth, themselves are witnesses.

He was a mirrour and example of temperance to all the Gentry in the country.

I know no greater infirmity did lie upon him then timorousnesse, he had not that height of masculine spirit which dwelt in some men.

But my beloved, he that is without sin among you let him cast the first stone.

He was as meek as a Lamb: a child

child might reprove him: an inferior might boldly tell him where (he thought) he went awry. I never found any lik him in this, he would ever love a man for it.

As for Covetousnesse, I dare say he was not much acquainted with it: for 1 when he had an opportunity to exercise covetousnesse in the disposure of the Vicarage of *Clun*, he gave it me as freely as the Sun shines upon me in the day time he was no mercenary Patron. 2 Covetousnesse and mercy never dwell together: a covetous man cannot be a mercifull man: but he was a man made up of pity and mercy to the poor; I speak but what you all know; the bellies of the hungry, and the backs of the naked did every year proclaim his bounty and charity. 3 Besides a covetous liver is no free giver in secret: a covetous man, when he gives, will cause his gifts to run

in a visible channel to be seen of men ; but (to my knowledge) he was a secret and hidden reliever of godly widows and others that were in want ; he refresh't their bowels with his hid treasures : he would send to know their indigencies and their straits : they need not send to him, he would send to them. 4 Yet more, a covetous man is not a cheerfull man under losses : but he was sweet and smiling under all his losses. 'Tis well known, these times frown'd upon him, and made him a great looser, yet he had a most composed and contented heart under them, with a great deal of acquiescence in God. 5 Besides, no man knew the dimensions of his estate better then himselfe, so that knowing what I now doe know, I admire at his constant liberality.

He was of a meek spirit, wonderfull

derfull free from the tang of re-
venge ; I know no man had such
a rare art of forgiving injuries as
he had : if any had spoke ill of
him, or done ill to him, he would
be silent, and passe it by with this,
*They are but men, they shew them-
selves to be men.*

He was a pattern of patience
under affliction ; Surely there
was much worth in this Gentle-
man, your faces speak such sad-
nesse for his losse and departure ;
Methinks I read a sad love, and
loving sadnes written upon your
faces for him.

It may be some may think, that
in setting out his graces and his
works, that I place some merit in
these things : No, I do not, and
therefore let me tell you, that
when he was like to dye before,
(for now God took him sudden-
ly) he uttered this speech, when
he saw his dear wife and servants
weeping

weeping before him : *Why doe ye weep thus ? cannot a man dye without all this adoe ?* and saith he, *I doe rely wholly upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ ;* and recovering that time: he did renounce all his own works that ever he had done, desiring to be accepted in Christ.

And thus I have done speaking of him, and so speaking longer to you: only I would entreat you to pray for his family ; He hath been an instrument of good unto the countrey, and now he is gone, pray for his Family, pray good on his Family, that much good may still come out of that Family.

And what shall we say of our selves, what shall I say to you ? I say againe, as I did before, Lose not your opportunities, shall we suffer the time to condemn us, that

Rom. 1. 17.

that was given to save us? we must either be saved in it, or condemned in it: ah then! let us time our businesse aright for heaven: you that have no grace, get it: I say, get it; you that have any grace, use it for God, and increate it: use your grace to Gods glory: act more grace: and get more grace. It is a sad signe when men do not go on in grace; the righteousness of God (saith Paul) is revealed from faith to faith; That is, they which have faith, shall have more faith: therefore this is a fearfull signe that we have no faith nor grace, if God doth not increate our faith and grace in us.

Againe, If men will sleep and do no good, God comes and takes away their gifts: Take his Talent from him (saith Christ) from the unprofitable servant, in Mat. 25. 18. You have God opening eyes, in Isa.

Isa. 6. to you have God shutting eyes, in *Job. 15. 1.* you have God dressing trees, in *Mat. 3. 10.* you have God hewing down trees, and in *Mat. 21.* there you have him cursing the tree, *Never fruit grow on thee hereafter*; if thou neglect prayer God will take away the gift of prayer; if you will not exercise repentance, God will take away repentance it self from thee; thy graces shall drop away one after another, and any vertue dye after another, untill the Soul dye too. Thus doth God smite the unprofitable servant, that crumbles away his time here, his opportunittes here, and acts not for God: *Take away from him, even that which he bath*, and then as the figtree began to wither, so do his gifts begin to flag & pair in him, as if a worm were still knawing at them, his knowledge looseth its relish, like a dying mans pallate,

his

Mat. 25. 28/

Verse 29.

his judgement in him rusts like a sword that is not used, His faith withereth as if it were blasted, & the Image of death is upon all his profession, he thinks like *Sampson* to pray as he did, and speak as he did, he shakes himselfe to duty as at other times, but his strength is gone from him. Wo to the soul of such a one: Soul- losses, and Soul- Judgements are the worst.

In one word, Sinners, wing your hast, delay not, but home to God, your opportunities are flying, fly you as fast home to God, let me argue the case with you as *Abraham* did with God, peradventure (saith he) there be 50 righteous in *Sodom*, peradventure, 20. peradventure but 10. and wilt thou not spare it for these? as *Abraham* reckoned up the righteous that might have bin in *Sodom*, so give me leave to number your days,

days, it may be thou hast 20 years yet to live, and wilt thou not serve God 20 years for a Crown of glory? 20 years service is too little for so great a Crown of glory, when thou com'st to dye, thou would'st be saved for ever, and wilt thou not serve out 20 years to be saved an eternitie? It may be thou hast but 10 years yet to live, and wilt thou not serve God 10 years, who hast served a lust twice 10? It may be thou hast but 7 years yet to live, an apprentice serves out 7 years for a trade, and wilt thou not serve 7 years for an Heaven? Jacob served twice 7 for Rachel, and wilt thou not serve out 7 for Christ? It may be there are but 5 cards in all left in the deck, but 5 years yet to live, nay, it may be but 5 months, nay, it may be but 5 weeks, nay, it may be but 5 days, nay, it may be but 5 hours, as soon as you are come

to go

K

home

home from burying the dead, you
 (it may be) may return your selves
 to be buried, ab then is it not time
 for you to make hast? you that
 have no grace, yet a little while,
 & you may loose heaven, (& is it
 not time then for you then to mak
 hast?) and you that have grace, yet
 a little while and you may arrive
 at heaven (and is it not time also
 for you to make hast?) up then &
 be doing: you Saints, I say, up
 & be doing, it may be your work
 is almost at an end; be not weary,
 pluck up your spirits; he which is
 tyred can crawl a little way; a lit-
 tle farther put on, a little farther
 yet, one step more for a Kingdom.

Lastly, I would charge every
 one of you that have heard me
 this day, not to gather from any
 thing I have said, that his oppor-
 tunity is past: form up no such
 conclusion. I doe not, I dare not
 say to the vilest sinner, that his
 oppor-

opportunity is past. Though
thine opportunity be passing a-
way, yet I doe not say it is past a-
way: this Sermon is not to shut
any Sinner out of Heaven, but to
hasten him towards heaven: be-
cause you have lost so many op-
portunities, I would hasten you
to come in to Christ, whilst there
are any yet left: because oppor-
tunities may be lost, I would
quicken you to come in, before all
are gone: Sinner, yet take Christ,
and God will yet receive thee; re-
pent now, and God will save thee
now. Say not, thy opportunity is
gone, for God calls thee, linger &
delay no longer, because opportu-
nity will be gone.

Deo Soli Gloria

Books lately printed for
Thomas Parkhurst, at the
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over against the great Con-
duit, at the lower end of
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fuge, in the day of his distresse, discovered
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fore the Right Honourable the Judges, and the
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one of which is a second part of his willful impetu-
tency; being five Sermons more than he preached
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Now in the presse. A Tract of *Flying Insects*,
wherein especially the manner of right ordering the
Bee is excellently described with discourses histori-
call, and Physicall, concerning them with a second
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